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CENTRAL ASIAN DRUG TRAFFICKING DILEMMA

by

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CENTRAL ASIAN DRUG TRAFFICKING DILEMMA

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Tajikistan, a state that is completely landlocked, consists of very rough terrain that is comprised of mountains, cliffs and glaciers. There are very few transportation links through the area that gives Tajikistan limited access to neighboring countries. Security problems resulting from the increasing flow of narcotics illegally smuggled across the 1200 km Tajikistan-Afghanistan border have become critical in understanding the nature of political instability within Central Asia. This thesis focuses on the growing trend of drug trafficking and use throughout Afghanistan and Tajikistan and the porous border the two countries share. It establishes why the northern route in Afghanistan has gained importance and why drug trafficking is reaching all time level highs. Russia provides the Border security in Tajikistan through the use of its Federal Border Service. Unfortunately, corruption within the government has not allowed the country to overcome its drug trafficking and use dilemma. The United States provides little assistance to the region and does not have any plans to assist in the near future. The thesis concludes that Central Asia, Russia and the United States need to cooperate and help stabilize the region in order to slow the transit of drugs through the region.

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I. INTRODUCTION

By the end of 1991, Russia saw the end to an intense struggle between the forces of change and the forces defending the old communist order. The communist rule came to an end and the Soviet Union disintegrated. Russia now faced the need for profound change, accompanied by widespread distress. The transition from the Soviet communist regime to a democratic, market-oriented system had plunged Russia into a deep economic depression and left the newly independent states of Central Asia to fend for themselves. Out of this situation a new society arose with gaping inequality and widespread poverty, suffering from pervasive corruption and criminality. Additionally, the Central Asian states have seen a rapid spread of illegal drugs and drug usage throughout the area since the breakup. Heroin, opium, hashish, cocaine, and many other large-scale drugs have spread throughout the region in epidemic proportions. The Central Asian nations of: Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, have all seen a dramatic rise in drug trafficking and use. All of the Central Asian states have been slow to admit that they face a serious danger.

A number of factors in the 1990's contributed to a sharp rise of drug trafficking and abuse that had been rare until then. First, with the break-up of the USSR and the withdrawal of Soviet/Russian border guards from many of the republics, the newly independent states were left with limited resources to guard themselves. The secure borders that once were strong had become porous. Secondly, participants in the Afghan civil war wanted to find new means of support to replace the subsidies once plentiful from Moscow or Washington. In the mid-1990's opium cultivation became an increasingly important source of revenue for all sides, as well as for farmers who saw poppies as one of the most lucrative cash crops in a poor country. Lastly, by the end of the decade Afghanistan was a major opium producer, with almost half of its population believed to be involved in some aspect of cultivation, production or trafficking. The wider Central Asia region was experiencing a sharp rise in drug addiction.

Tajikistan is not a major producer of narcotics, but is a major transit country for heroin and opium from Afghanistan. The opium/heroin moves through Tajikistan

through Central Asia and on to Russian and European markets, and it generally does not enter the United States. The volume of drugs following this route via multiple methods of transportation is significant and growing. Although there were dramatic gains in the total volume of drugs seized, the Government of Tajikistan (GOT) continued to have difficulty combating drug trafficking and other narcotics-related problems in a coordinated manner. Drug abuse of heroin, opium, and cannabis in Tajikistan is a growing problem. Tajikistan's medical infrastructure is highly inadequate and cannot address the population's growing need for addiction treatment and rehabilitation. Geography and economics have made Tajikistan an attractive transit route for illegal narcotics. Its border with opium-producing Afghanistan, which is dominated by mountainous terrain, is thinly guarded, difficult to patrol, and easily crossed without inspection at a number of points. The disruption of normal economic activity during the 1992-1997 civil war gave rise to a warlord class whose leaders continue to jostle for control of the lucrative narcotics trade. With the average monthly income in the country remaining below U.S. \$10, the temptation to become involved in narcotics-related transactions remains high for many segments of society. In-country cultivation of narcotic crops is minimal, and the GOT is unaware of any processing or precursor chemical production facilities.

The primary question that needs to be answered is:

* What measures need to be taken in order to stop illegal drug trafficking and use across the Tajikistan/Afghanistan border?

The purpose of this thesis is to look at the growing trend of drug trafficking and use throughout Afghanistan and Tajikistan and the porous border the two countries share. Russia, Eastern Europe and countries throughout Western Europe have all seen a dramatic increase in drug use due to drug trafficking across the porous border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The spread of illegal drug trafficking from Afghanistan is even making it as far as the United States. In addition to drug trafficking, drug use and communicable diseases are increasing at vast rates. The upsurge in Intravenous Drug Users (IDU's) is creating a great dilemma for many nations. Russia's population is declining and it is estimated that "by the end of 2050, the Russian population would

shrink by 30 percent, from 143.6 million to 101.9 million.”¹ Drug use plays a major role in the depopulation of Russia with the rise of IDU’s and HIV/AIDS. Additionally, with the rise in HIV/AIDS, drug use is of major concern since its effects can be seen around the globe. The United States and Russia need to focus attention on the drug trafficking dilemma and work toward strengthening the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Chapter II will discuss why drug trafficking has shifted to Tajikistan, the economics involved, the effects of drug production and trafficking and why the United States and Russia should concern themselves with the problems. In 2000, it was estimated that 75 percent of the world’s opium supply came from Afghanistan.² Since then those numbers have grown. Given the economic importance of opium poppies to Afghanistan’s own economy, the effectiveness of their ban on cultivation has been less than impressive. Several measures for prohibition have been attempted with successful short-term results, but long-term results have been negative. The Taliban has attempted to stop the production of opium grown on its land, but the events since 9/11 have severely stifled those efforts. It is estimated that as much as half of its population and 80 percent of the economy was in some way connected to the drug trade.³ Opium poppies have been known to grow in 27 of the 29 provinces, and some 200,000 Afghan households were involved in this cultivation.⁴ Additionally, over 200 laboratories for processing opium into heroin were believed to be in the country, each capable of producing ten kilograms of heroin daily. Countries in Central Asia have sought to stop opium production for 25 years, but the trend in Afghanistan has been just the opposite.

Chapter III establishes why the Afghanistan-Tajikistan cross-border trafficking is the center of gravity and then analyzes trafficking groups and routes in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Tajikistan is not a major producer of opium or illegal drugs, but it is a gateway to the rest of Europe due to its porous borders. The traditional poppy growing

¹ Powell, David E. “Death as a Way of Life: Russia’s Demographic Decline.” *Economic Digest*, October 2002, p. 1.

² Filipov, David. “Drug Trade Flourishes Again in Afghanistan.” *Boston Globe*, 31 October 2002, p. 1.

³ Philippe Noubel, “Afghan Drugs Feed Central Asian Habit,” *The Times of Central Asia*, 15 June 2000, p. 24.

⁴ Ibid, p. 24.

areas in Central Asia have been the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan. Cannabis also grows in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic, but as its effects are less dangerous, it has not attracted as much attention or impacted as negatively on the area as opium and its processed derivative, heroin. The new drug trade made its strongest initial routes into Tajikistan, where the situation was exacerbated by civil war between 1992-97. Tajikistan is still recovering from its civil war, which left much of the country's already impoverished economy in ruins. Part of the Tajik population fled the fighting into Afghanistan, thus indirectly facilitating development of new transport networks. The combination of its long border with Afghanistan and its barely functioning economy has made it the main gateway into Central Asia for Afghan opium and heroin. Since Tajikistan is still facing many economic difficulties, the drug business has become an important source of income for many people. Drug barons and other drug trafficking groups have a vested interest in maintaining the drug trade, as do many poor individuals living along transit routes who often have no other means of earning a living.

Chapter IV examines the strategies and capacities of the border agencies and how they fall short. Security problems resulting from the increasing flow of narcotics illegally smuggled across the 1200 km Tajikistan-Afghanistan border have become critical in understanding the nature of political instability within Central Asia. Border security in Tajikistan is important in helping to stop the drug trade that plagues the country. The most important security structure responsible for the security of the Tajik border is Russian, not a Tajik group. In Tajikistan itself "the responsibility for border security is placed under two 'power-ministries:' the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Security."⁵ Though Tajikistan is clearly heavily reliant upon Russia for its border security it does, however, possess its own border guard force, though substantially smaller and less able to fulfill its functions as effectively. The Tajik border guard service is structured in much the same way as the FPS, with its headquarters in Dushanbe and divided into regional districts responsible for the security of the state border. The KOGG (Committee for the Protection of the State Border) is the Tajik border guard service. Unfortunately, both agencies fall short of their mission and drug traffickers are able to get their supplies across with little resistance. This chapter will specify in detail where each falls short

⁵ Ibid, p. 6.

The conclusion will examine the effect of drug trade and production and how states are taking action to slow this ever-growing problem. Additionally, it will be necessary to show why the United States and Russia need to step up efforts to control drug trafficking and use in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Efforts need to be increased on providing education and training to agencies within each state.

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II. TAJIKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN – DRUG EFFECTS, EXTENT AND ECONOMICS INVOLVED

A. INTRODUCTION

In countries around the world, the issue of drugs touches the lives of young and old people across the socioeconomic spectrum: from people experimenting with the latest “party” drug to vulnerable and marginalized populations, including refugee and displaced children, young and old sex workers and soldiers, street children, and institutionalized persons, who use drugs to cope with a stressful existence. Populations in the transition region are expanding at both ends of this continuum, and they are facing a drug issue that was unknown in their parents’ time. Illicit drugs, especially in the narcotic family, were relatively absent under communism. For instance, under communist rule travel was restricted, borders were tightly controlled, and local currencies were without value on the international market. The changes triggered by the transition have, unfortunately, opened up the region not only to more democratic values and market forces, but also to the trafficking, production and use of drugs.

The war on terrorism in Afghanistan following 9/11 saw the shift in drug trafficking routes and supply lines. The declines of heroin seizures in Southwest Asia were largely related to the sharply reduced opium production in southern and eastern Afghanistan in 2001.

The concentration of opium production in 2001 in northern Afghanistan meant that the northern route gained in importance. Thus heroin seizures in Central Asia rose by more than 55% in 2001.⁶

The growing importance of the Northern route (silk road) for heroin leaving Afghanistan is a phenomenon that has been reflected in seizure statistics since the mid 1990s. Between 1998 and 2001 heroin seizures rose five-fold in Central Asia, as trafficking and the response to this increased, in particular by the Tajik authorities. “In both 2001 and 2002 about 85% of all heroin seizures reported from Central Asia were

⁶ Chawla, Sandeep, Thibault le Pichon, Thomas Pietschmann, Patrick Seramy, Aruna Nathwani, Johny Thomas, Ali Saadedin. “Global Illicit Drug Trends 2003,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, Vienna and New York: June 2003, p. 55.

made by the authorities in Tajikistan.”⁷ Chapter III will describe in greater detail the trafficking routes and organizations involved in transporting the drugs from Afghanistan through the northern route.

In addition to the preceding example, the growing shift in the drug trade from the eastern, western and southern routes to the northern route are due to several other factors. This chapter will explain why Central Asia, in particular Tajikistan, has seen an increase in drug trafficking through the region, why other countries are not the focal route, the effects of drug abuse and neglect, and why the United States and Russia need to focus more attention on the Central Asian drug trafficking dilemma.

B. ECONOMIC STRUGGLES

Economic struggles for both Afghanistan and Central Asia have made the region a perfect environment for drug trafficking and use. Weakened governments, corrupt officials, lack of control and geography all contribute to the weakened state of the economy. Reforms are currently being made to both Afghanistan’s and Tajikistan’s economic systems, but drug trafficking and production are creating delays in providing a more stable region. Tajikistan’s economic struggles will be studied first followed by Afghanistan. Additionally, an assessment of region will be provided along with reasons for the continued success of drugs in each area.

All five countries in Central Asia have made progress toward decentralizing their economies, expanding international links, and diversifying and increasing production and trade. Unfortunately, the changes in these economies have not been that great and much remains to be done in these countries. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been the two fastest reformers. Kazakhstan has taken advantage of its rich resource base and more diversified economic structure. Kyrgyzstan has been a little slower than Kazakhstan, but once it overcame its initial limitations, the country strengthened. On the opposite side of the spectrum, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have been more sporadic on their resource and output diversity. The economic reforms of these two countries have not seen a steady increase or positive outcome. Tajikistan, the last of the Central Asian states, has faced a different situation in their economic reforms. They were plagued by Civil War

⁷ Ibid, p. 55.

from 1992 to 1997. During this time period economic stability was not achievable. The constant battles kept Tajikistan from being able to establish programs to achieve economic success.

Tajikistan was the poorest of the Soviet Union's socialist republics and remains the most impoverished country in the region today. First hit by the cut in subsidies from Moscow, "which had funded 80 percent of the budget before independence, and then by a bloody civil war, it has struggled to lift living standards out of extreme poverty."⁸ Tajikistan has faced sharp output declines and erosions of living standards during its early years of transition. There were severe disruptions to input supplies and traditional lines of production due to the civil unrest. Tajikistan's development agenda still remains challenging despite political stability and economic growth achieved after the end of civil war. A large external debt complicates economic management and affects Tajikistan's ability to reduce poverty. Poverty remains the main challenge faced by Tajikistan. "Over 80% of the country's population are living in poverty, with children and the elderly particularly affected."⁹ Poverty in Tajikistan encompasses low levels of income and consumption, limited earning opportunities, and poor and uneven access to basic public services such as education, healthcare, water supply and heat. Due to the poor conditions in Tajikistan it has been said "A million Tajik men have fled to Russia to look for work, stranding their families here."¹⁰

Poverty drives drug involvement in Tajikistan, where the average family of five or six may have to get by on less than U.S. \$10 per month.¹¹ Employment is frequently through patronage and loyalty networks rather than qualifications. People have to buy their jobs and positions in many sectors, and appointees are nominated as a form of reward. As a result of the economic hardships in Tajikistan, it is estimated that some 30

⁸ ICG. "Tajikistan: A Roadmap For Development." *ICG Asia Report*, Osh/Brussels, 24 April 2003, p. 1.

⁹ Van Dyck, Miriam. "World Bank: World Bank Launches New Strategy of Assistance for Tajikistan; Program Envisages Support Of Up To US \$80 Million Over Next Three Years." *M2 Presswire*, 28 February 2003, p. 2.

¹⁰ Kaiser, Robert G. "Tajiks Upbeat About 'Most Backward' Republic; With Civil War Over, Stability Masks Crises In Former Soviet Land." *The Washington Post*, Washington, D.C., August 1, 2002, pg. 1.

¹¹ *Summary of Fact Finding Mission to Tajikistan*, Open Society Institute, 2000, p. 2.

to 50 percent of all economic activity is reportedly linked to drug trafficking. Poverty in turn leads to corruption (and vice versa). “Corruption is pervasive at all levels: from the lowly civil servant demanding bribes to supplement his small salary to top ministers benefiting from kickbacks and the graft through agencies.”¹²

In Afghanistan, several factors played a role in the development of Afghanistan’s opium economy. The most important one was weak government control over the country in the 1980s and the 1990s. As elsewhere in the world the lack, or collapse, of a central administration gave drug traffickers, criminal syndicates and terrorist groups the opportunity to develop an illegal economy for drugs, arms, contraband, and the provision of acolyte financing for further criminal activity. Eventually, the economic system collapsed. After more than 20 years of war and conflict the degradation of agricultural and other economic infrastructure was complete. Irrigation channels, cultivation terraces, roads and warehousing, were all destroyed. Agricultural production of legitimate crops cannot be sustained without some basic storage, marketing and transportation facilities. Opium does not face these limitations. It is durable, easy to store and carry to the market. Opium markets, in any case, operated like spot and futures markets, with traders providing credit for future production, buying the opium in local bazaars or even at the farm-gate, and traffickers taking over the marketing. As poppy cultivation became a lucrative agricultural activity, it is no surprise that it took over the best available land. The amount of land available for food production declined and the country’s food deficit became acute.

As mentioned above, the opium economy developed in Afghanistan because of: lack of effective government administration until the recent past; degradation of agriculture and most economic infrastructure due to twenty years of war; a war economy and related black marketeering. Through the 1980s and 1990s several competing factions financed their war efforts with opium revenue. Since most of the opium producing provinces came under Taliban control after 1996, the Taliban reaped the largest gains from the opium economy. The Taliban cultivation ban increased prices in 2001 and

¹² ICG, p. 14.

revalued stocks by a factor of 10; more liquidity in the hands of traders thus created further incentives for the opium economy.¹³

C. ECONOMICS OF DRUG TRADE

Since Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Russia's economies are in crisis, the drug business has become an important source of income for many people. Drug barons have a vested interest in maintaining the drug trade, as do many poor individuals living along transit routes who often have no other means of earning a living. Each area is fighting the battle over drug trafficking, use and production. Due to the lucrative nature of the business, it has not been easy to try and deter individuals from participating in some area of this illegal business.

Afghanistan, which has been previously mentioned, is the world's leader in opium production and trade. Attempts to stop the drug activities have had their positives and negatives to the region. Given the economic importance of opium poppies to Afghanistan's own economy, the effectiveness of their ban on cultivation has been impressive for the most part. Unfortunately, prohibition has had a severe impact on the living standards in Afghanistan. It is estimated that as much as half of its population and 80 percent of the economy was in some way connected to the drug trade.¹⁴ Opium poppies have been known to grow in 27 of the 29 provinces, and some 200,000 Afghan households were involved in this cultivation.¹⁵ Additionally, over 200 laboratories for processing opium into heroin were believed to be in the country, each capable of producing ten kilograms of heroin daily.

In Afghanistan, poverty has made drug production necessary for survival, and warlords have used it to consolidate their power. Virtually the entire economy is black market, aside from aid money.

¹³ Chawla, Sandeep, Thomas Pietschmann, Thibault le Pichon, Aruna Nathwani, Johny Thomas, and Melissa Tullis. "The Opium Economy in Afghanistan." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, New York, 2003, p. 76.

¹⁴ Olcott, Martha Brill and Natalia Udalova. "Working Papers: Drug trafficking on the Great Silk Road: The Security Environment in Central Asia." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, Washington D.C., Number 11, March 2000, p. 8.

¹⁵ Philippe Noubel, "Afghan Drugs Feed Central Asian Habit," *The Times of Central Asia*, 15 June 2000, p. 24.

The legal exports are worth approximately \$80 million, according to the CIA's World Fact Book: mostly carpets, dried fruit, nuts. The opium crop, at rock-bottom prices in Afghan markets, is worth at least \$120 million, based on UN estimates of \$30 a kilogram in February 2000.¹⁶

Since then, the wholesale price has jumped tenfold. "The true value of the exported drugs, once they hit the streets in Moscow, Amsterdam, Geneva, London or New York, is estimated at up to \$100 billion."¹⁷ According to General Andrei Nikolayev, former director of the FPS,

An amount of heroin costs \$100 in Badakhshan Province of Afghanistan. Once it is smuggled across the River Panj in to the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), in Tajikistan its value increases to \$1,000. As it is taken through Osh in Kyrgyzstan it increases to \$10,000; when it reaches Europe it costs \$100,000.¹⁸

Afghanistan, like most other countries, has also been confronted with the problem of drug users committing crime to finance their habit. With refugees returning and with prices of opiates having risen tenfold in 2001 and having remained at the higher levels in 2002, it is likely that drug-related property crime will continue to increase for some time.

In 2000, a kilogram of opium, i.e. the average annual requirement of an opium user, could be bought from the bazaars for around \$39 per kg. Given reports of average wages of \$1-\$2 a day an average Afghan could reckon with an income of \$365-\$730 a year (about \$550, on average).¹⁹

Thus his opium using habit (estimated at around 1 kg per year) would have cost him about 7% of his salary, or less if he had direct access to opium production. "By mid 2002, however, opium prices fluctuated at around \$400 a kg, i.e. about three quarters of average annual legal income (and for some Afghans less than their total annual income)."²⁰ It is obvious that unless such an opium using person either gives up his habit or gains direct access to opium production, the only short-term "solution" for him is to commit theft and other illegal activities. If the higher prices are maintained, this should

¹⁶ Roston, Aram. "Central Asia's Heroin Problem." *The Nation*, 25 March 2002, p. 24.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 24.

¹⁸ McDermott, Roger N., "Border Security in Tajikistan: Countering the Narcotics Trade?" *Conflict Studies Research Center*, October 2002, p. 9.

¹⁹ Chawla, Sandeep, Thomas Pietschmann, Thibault le Pichon, Aruna Nathwani, Johny Thomas, and Melissa Tullis. "The Opium Economy in Afghanistan." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, New York, 2003, p. 76.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 76.

help to reduce the incidence rate, i.e. the number of new drug recruits entering the market, and thus drug related crime as well.

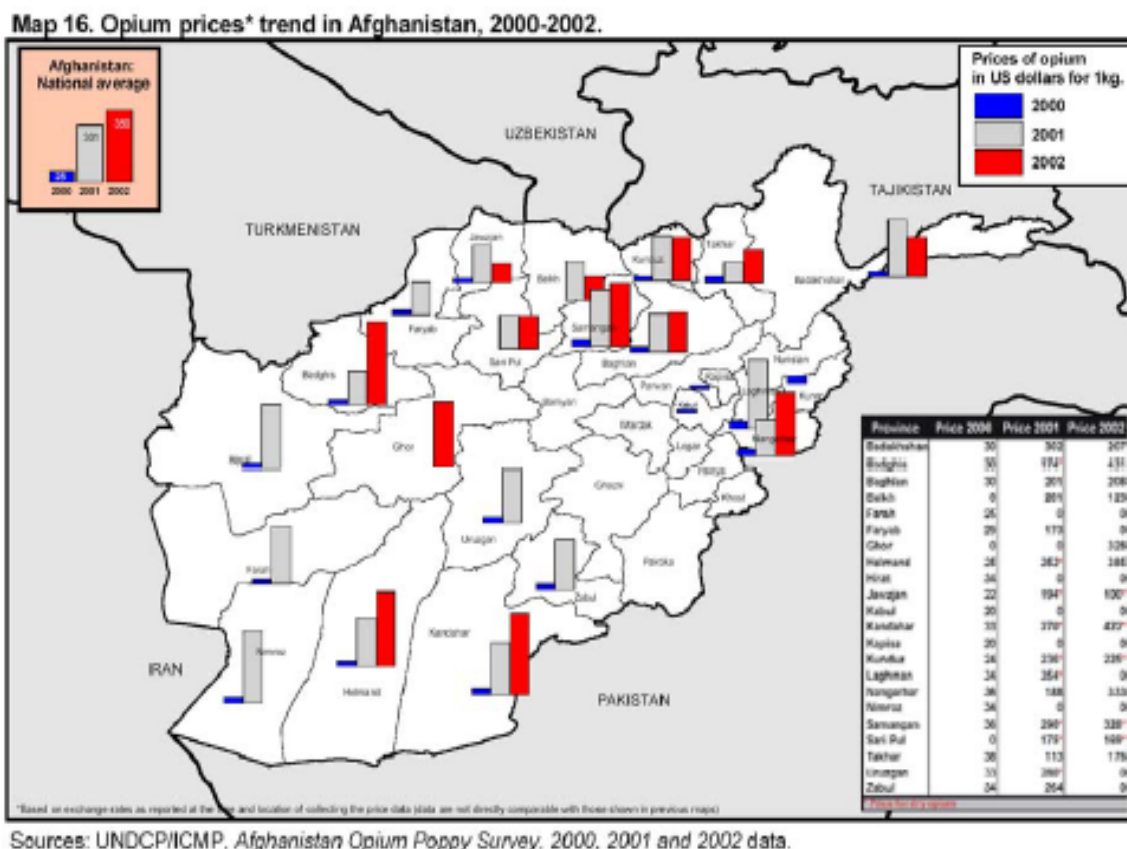


Figure 1. **Opium Prices – Trend in Afghanistan (2000-2002)**²¹

As one can see, the economics of drug trade are having a serious effect on both Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The value of opium as compared with other resources cannot be matched. The devastation drug trafficking has on a society is clearly evident in the two countries studied. The lucrative nature of the business is causing crime and corruption that is stopping the two societies from moving forward. Next, the profits of drug trade will be looked at to understand the why people in the region are involved in this illegal activity.

D. PROFITS

With regard to Central Asia the ‘typical trafficking profits’ are derived from purchasing opium and heroin in Tajikistan, in the border areas with northern Afghanistan,

²¹ Chawla, et al., p. 61.

and selling the opium within Central Asia and the heroin in the Russian Federation. While the profits made from opium trafficking are minimal, gross profits made by shipping heroin to Moscow and selling it there is huge. Intelligence information as well as arrest statistics indeed show a very strong involvement of criminal groups of Central Asian origin in this trade: “92% of drug smugglers arrested at Russia’s borders in 1999 had a Central Asian background; 75% were Tajiks, 9% Uzbeks, 4% Kazakhs, 3% from Kyrgyzstan and 1% were from Turkmenistan.”²² “Based on an average price of more than \$33,000 per kilogram, the gross profits to be made by criminal groups in Central Asia are likely to exceed \$2 billion a year, and are thus higher than the gross profits made by criminal Iranian or Pakistani groups.”²³ Expressed as a percentage of GDP, the calculations suggest that the gross trafficking profits made in Central Asia are equivalent to 7% of the region’s aggregate GDP, and constitute an even significantly higher percentage for countries with a small GDP, such as Tajikistan.

The overall income from trafficking in opiates in countries neighboring Afghanistan can be estimated at around US\$ 4 billion. This is equivalent to 2% of the aggregated GDP of the countries neighboring Afghanistan.²⁴

Opiate prices fluctuate in the region for numerous reasons: demand, production, eradication, interdiction, and greed. It was discovered that the lower prices made opiates affordable to ever-larger sections of society. In Tajikistan, for instance, heroin prices were reported to have declined to such an extent that the price for a shot of heroin was about the same as a bottle of beer. The reaction of consumers to falling drug prices, measured in Central Asia through official registration systems (usually based on treatment) tend to show abuse trends with some delay. Thus the strong declines of prices in Tajikistan, for instance, only led to a rapid rise in the number of registered drug abusers two years later. Moreover, the rapid increase in the number of registered drug abusers continued even though the decline in prices became less pronounced in subsequent years.²⁵

²² Chawla, et al., p. 192.

²³ Ibid, p. 192.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 192.

²⁵ Drug abuse will be talked about in greater detail in the next section. The following example is used to show the impact of drug abuse and the economic impact it is having on society.

Estimation of the likely magnitudes of funds generated from trafficking revealed that the largest profits among Afghanistan's neighbors are apparently being made in Central Asia:

\$2.2 billion, equivalent to 7% of GDP. Gross trafficking profits in Iran were estimated to range from \$1 to \$1.3 billion, equivalent to 1% to 1.3% of GDP. Gross profits for Pakistan were conservatively estimated at \$400 million, equivalent to 0.7% of GDP, but could go up to 800 million or 1.3% of GDP.²⁶

In total about \$4 billion is generated from drug trafficking in countries neighboring Afghanistan. In contrast to the popular perception that an inflow of such funds must be positive for an economy, the opposite seems to be true. Funds as large as these, in criminal hands, obviously destabilize the state, civil society as well as the economy. The smaller countries of Central Asia are particularly vulnerable in this regard. Corruption, violence and 'dirty money', including financial support for terrorist organizations, have negative repercussions for legitimate investment and thus compromise economic growth in the long run.

Profits from drug trafficking will continue the drug trade throughout the region. The continuing shift of the drug trade from the other regions of Afghanistan to the north is clearly evident. Profits determine the route and clearly the profits being made from trafficking through Central Asia (in particular Tajikistan) is making headlines. The fluctuation in prices of drugs is not having as large an impact to the Central Asian route due to the ease of transporting drugs across the border and the lack of seizures.

E. DRUG USE

The strongest increases in opiate abuse have, in recent years, taken place in the countries of Central Asia. The increases can be linked to the northern route for trafficking opiates from Afghanistan to the Russian Federation, and other countries. The number of drug users registered with the health authorities showed an exponential growth, more than tripling between 1992 and 2000. If the 1990-2000 period is considered, available data show a six-fold increase. In contrast to Iran, drug abuse in the Central Asia region is, in general largely linked to abuse of heroin. In the five Central

²⁶ Chawla, et al., p. 203.

Asian countries studied, opiate use, mostly intravenously administered heroin, appears to be even more widespread than cannabis use, the traditional drug of choice in the region.

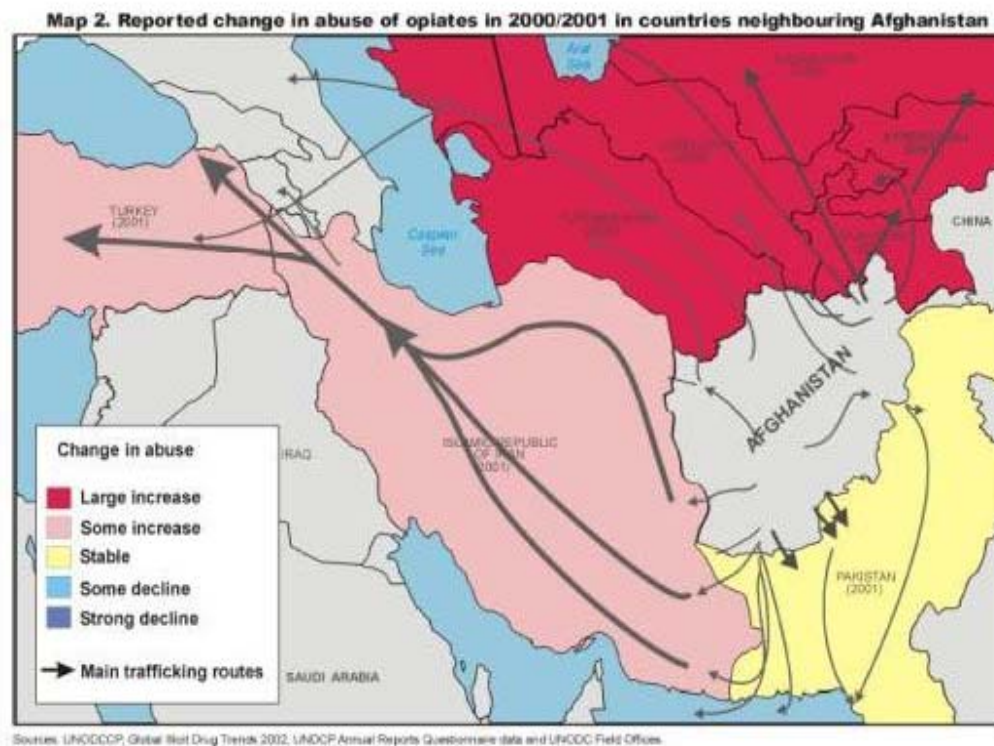


Figure 2. **Opiate Abuse per region (2000/2001)**²⁷

Based on the number of registered drug abusers, Tajikistan showed a seven-fold increase of drug abuse over the 1992-2000 period (28% per year).²⁸ This went in parallel with dramatically increasing levels of trafficking. The other Central Asian countries reported a tripling in the number of registered drug abusers over the same period, “equivalent to an average annual growth rate of 16% to 17%.”²⁹

Considering the proportions of people in treatment for opiate abuse it can be estimated that about 0.6% of the total population or 0.9% of the population age 15 and above in Central Asia consume opiates.³⁰ This is three times the corresponding ratio for Western Europe. However, if the prevalence estimates are compared to the size of the

²⁷ Ibid, p. 169. Note: Figure 2 shows the large increase in opiate abuse in neighboring Central Asia, Russia and Eastern Europe.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 185.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 185.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 190.

population age 15 and above “the second highest rate among the Central Asian countries is in Tajikistan (1.2%), ahead of Kazakhstan (1.1%).”³¹ This reversal in the ranking is a reflection of the higher proportion of the population under the age of 15 in Tajikistan as compared to Kazakhstan.

Given high levels of unemployment in the country, productivity losses due to drug abuse have not played much of a role either. There was still more than sufficient labor available in the country. In short, while the social aspect of drug abuse is important, the economic impact of drug abuse has not yet reached any critical orders of magnitude. The economic impact could, however, become far more serious as refugees return to Afghanistan. According to sources “more than 1.3 million Afghan refugees were repatriated to Afghanistan over the March-June 2002 period, of which 1.2 million returned from Pakistan, 100,000 from Iran and 10,000 from Central Asia.”³² It is likely that a significant number of these refugees have a drug problem. Apart from less money available for essentials, there will also be less money available to take advantage of development opportunities. A number of cases have already been reported where refugee repatriation grants were simply used to buy drugs.

Therefore, countries neighboring Afghanistan will suffer some time to come from the consequences of Afghanistan’s opium bumper harvests. The reaction to rising drug prices is slower than to falling drug prices, because once a drug epidemic has started, it tends to fuel itself for a considerable period of time. Drug users, in order to finance their habit, become increasingly engaged in local drug trafficking activities, over time contributing to a further spread of drug abuse, even though drug prices may already have started to rise. Tajikistan, which showed the strongest increases in the abuse rates in recent years, is particularly vulnerable to further rises in drug abuse. Treatment could help to break the vicious circle. However, treatment is rather expensive for countries that have only very limited funds at their disposal.³³

³¹ Chawla, et al., p. 190.

³² Ibid, p. 150.

³³ Discussion of possible solutions to Tajikistan/Afghanistan’s drug trafficking dilemma will be provided in the conclusion.

F. DRUG ADDICTION AND HIV/AIDS

It is difficult for any country to determine the extent and nature of drug use and for that matter the extent of HIV/AIDS. In the case of Tajikistan, the lack of an established, effective mechanism for discovering drug addicts and establishing records on them, as well as the lack of legislation regulating drug treatment, make it impossible to determine the precise number of drug users and people suffering from addiction. There is a high degree of hidden drug use and addiction due to fear of prosecution or repressive measures by law enforcement agencies.

Studies have been conducted to examine the link between drug trafficking routes in Central Asia and the outbreaks of HIV. This is accomplished by using molecular sub-typing of HIV to track different strains of HIV in infected people living along drug routes. Sub-typing involves isolating the HIV virus from the blood of infected people and sequencing the DNA of the virus. By mapping out where the subtypes are found geographically as well as the risk factors of those infected with the specific subtypes, it is possible to create an accurate picture of where HIV has entered a population and how it is moving.³⁴

Through the use of sub-typing and studies on HIV/AIDS it is quite significant that Central Asia is a trafficking route, as there are distinct differences in heroin use and subsequent HIV epidemics along the heroin supply continuum. It begins in the production zones, follows trafficking routes and ends in destination markets. In production zones, such as Afghanistan, there is an abundance of opium, making it accessible and inexpensive. Most users in these areas smoke the opium, with a minority snorting it. Neither of these methods present a direct risk for HIV. As a person progresses along drug trafficking routes, opium is less abundant. The further away from the source one goes, the more expensive pure heroin becomes (handlers along the way add on their fees). Many people begin by smoking the heroin, then transition to injection. Once the heroin reaches the destination markets, users almost immediately begin injecting, as smoking is neither economical nor effective to become high, as the drug has been cut so much that it must be injected for the desired effect.

³⁴ Frantz, Douglas. "Drug Use Begetting AIDS in Central Asia," *The New York Times*, 05 August 2001, p. 34.

AIDS first appeared in Central Asia in Kazakhstan's Karaganda area at the end of the 1980's. Since then that area has seen a near epidemic among the intravenous user community.³⁵ Part of the reason for the infection spread so rapidly was ignorance. Until the mid-1990's many people have not even heard of the disease. It is believed in 2000 that 85 percent of those testing positive for HIV had become infected through sharing needles.³⁶ The highest numbers of cases have been reported in the city of Termitau in Karaganda. The city is a main transit point for drugs traveling through Kazakhstan to Russia. "Over 1,000 people there have contracted the infection, slightly less than epidemic proportion, which is defined as infection of one percent of a population."³⁷

In Tajikistan the healthcare system is in dismal condition and heavily dependent upon international assistance.

Government spending has decreased dramatically over the past decade, and only 5 percent of the GDP was spent on health in 1998. In addition, the average healthcare worker's salary had fallen to under U.S.\$5 per month in 1998, contributing to a large-scale exodus.³⁸

Those who remain are not the always the best qualified. Healthcare is free of charge but it has been de facto privatized because the dismally low investment and salaries have created an informal payment system. Patients must not only supplement doctor's income and pay for his or her service, they must also purchase all drugs, some equipment, provide meals and nursing care. Since all services must be paid for, primacy healthcare is out of the question for most families. The result of this collapsing system has been a resurgence of diseases once eradicated in Tajikistan. Typhoid, malaria, tuberculosis, syphilis, malnutrition and water-borne diseases are just a few of those now proliferating.³⁹

A new challenge for Tajikistan comes from HIV/AIDS. There are less than 100 registered AIDS cases but in reality the problem is probably much worse; unofficial

³⁵ "Kazakhstan: Up to 200,000 Drug Users Have Few Places to Turn to for Treatment," *Eurasianet*, 21 December 2000, p. 3.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 2.

³⁷ Ian MacKinnon and Adam Piore, "The Other AIDS Crisis," *Newsweek*, 11 June 2001, p. 56.

³⁸ ICG, p. 17.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 17.

estimates are over 2,000. Between 750 and 1,000 HIV positive cases were registered in 2000 and 2001, pointing to a rapid upward trend.⁴⁰ Insufficient testing and fear of social repercussions have meant that many people at risk are simply not tested. Injecting drug users are the most at-risk, and as drug abuse is increasing rapidly, it is expected that the incidence of HIV will grow in tandem, but sexual transmission of HIV is also escalating.

The HIV/AIDS growth rate is of particular concern for Central Asia and countries along the trafficking routes. These countries, especially Tajikistan, cannot turn a blind eye to the problems that arise from IDU's. It is imperative that these countries receive the needed help to stop this drug trade as the northern route becomes more popular. Focus needs to be turned towards outside countries for help. Russia and the United States need to interdict and eradicate this dilemma.

G. UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA

Russia and the United States have limited influence within the Central Asian and Afghanistan region when it comes to drug trafficking. Russia has maintained its border troops within Tajikistan after the break up of the USSR in 1991. This is primarily due to the instability that was apparent in the country at that time. On 23 September 1992 the FPS Border Group was officially set up in Tajikistan and on 25 May 1993 a bilateral agreement between Russia and Tajikistan was signed that gives the authority for the protection of the Tajik border to the FPS.⁴¹ Originally this agreement was intended only to serve as an interim measure until the city of Dushanbe could construct and sufficiently strengthen its own border guard to protect its borders. The border group of the FPS stationed in Tajikistan is quite unique as a military formation, with "7% of its officers, nearly 50% of the warrant officers, 69% of contract servicemen and 99% of conscripts are Tajik citizens."⁴² The rest of the personnel in the FPS are Russian.⁴³ Unfortunately, Russia wants to pull its troops out of the region and turn it back over to Tajikistan. Tajikistan is not able to patrol its border without outside help due to lack of training, equipment and personnel.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 18.

⁴¹ McDermott, Roger N., *Border Security in Tajikistan: Countering the Narcotics Trade?*, p. 4.

⁴² Ibid, p. 5.

⁴³ Chapter IV will focus on the border dilemma facing Tajikistan with its neighbors. The following example is used to describe the limited influence Russia has with Tajikistan.

Russia should be more concerned with the drug trafficking dilemma than it is at the present time. “The decline in the birthrate and the rise in the death rate have proved a devastating combination: Russia appears to be the first country in history to experience such a sharp decrease in births versus deaths for reasons other than war, famine, or disease.”⁴⁴

Between January 1, 1987 (when the AIDS virus first appeared in the Soviet Union) and December 31, 2000, 83,054 individuals were diagnosed as HIV positive. In 2001 the number of registered cases doubled, reaching 177,354.⁴⁵

On August 6, 2002, Vadim Pokrovskii, head of the Federal Center for the Prevention and Treatment of HIV/AIDS (the AIDS Center), “put the figure for registered HIV-positive citizens at 206,000.”⁴⁶ But the figure for those “registered” with the state is misleading. Experts acknowledge that to determine the actual number of HIV-positive individuals, some sort of multiplier—suggestions cluster around 6 to 10—must be used, since those most likely to become infected avoid contact with the authorities.⁴⁷

In particular, IDUs evade testing since they can be arrested simply for using drugs. WHO says the “true number” of Russian infections is 7 to 10 times the figure for those officially registered. In July 2002, “when reporting that 205,000 cases of HIV had been registered, Pokrovskii added that the total number infected ‘could be eight to ten times higher.’”⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Powell, David E. “Death as a Way of Life: Russia’s Demographic Decline.” *Economic Times*, October 2002, p. 344.

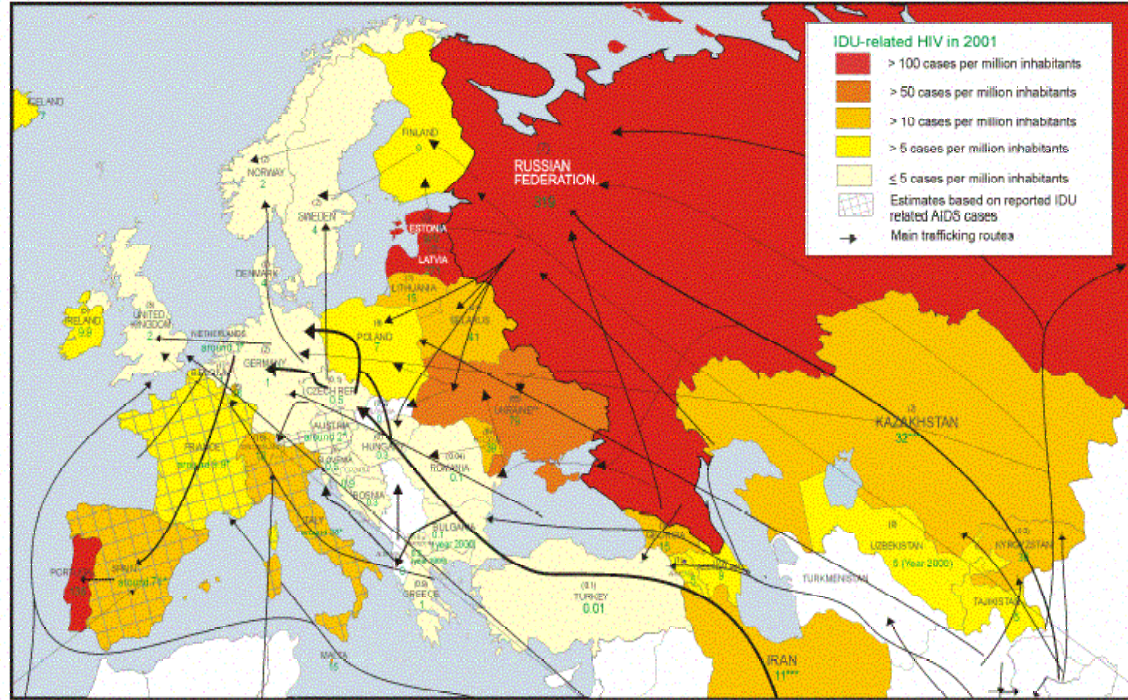
⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 346.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 346.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 346.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 347.

**Map 10. Newly diagnosed injecting drug use related HIV infections per million inhabitants in 2001
(data for 1996 in brackets)**



* UNODC estimate based on regression analysis. ** Lower number for 2001 is not due to a decline in IDU related HIV but due to changes in registration system.
*** UNODC estimate based on total number of newly reported HIV cases in 2001.
Sources: EuroHIV, HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Europe End-year report 2001, June 2002 and previous years.

Figure 3. Russia – IDU-related HIV cases in 2001⁴⁹

Additionally, Russia has the world’s highest rate of growth for new HIV cases although the rate allegedly is declining.

Between 1996 and 2001, the number of new infections increased on average by 2.4 times annually. In January 2001, Pokrovskii predicted that 2 million cases would occur by the end of the year; by 2005, he suggested, the total could reach 5 million (although more recently, he indicated that the “5 million” figure might not be reached until 2007).⁵⁰

It is unclear whether the slowdown is real or the authorities are underreporting new cases. In any case, Russia is facing a great dilemma and with the drug trafficking routes from Central Asia (in particular from Tajikistan through Kazakhstan and into Russia). The increase in intravenous drug users is creating a harsh reality for Russia. Their population is declining.

⁴⁹ Chawla, et al., p. 202. Note: Figure 2 displays the vast amount of HIV related infections in 2001. Central Asia is rising as the figure portrays and the rates beyond 2001 are even greater.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 347.

As for the United States, it does not receive a great quantity of opium, heroin, or morphine from Afghanistan and the Central Asian region. As a result, the United States provides minimal funding for the drug trade from Afghanistan into the neighboring regions. One of the top reasons why the United States is not as involved is because it does not receive the majority of its drugs (in particular heroin) from the Asian states.

The United States entered the Central Asian region following the attacks on 9/11. “The US government has acquired basing or transit rights for passage of warplanes and military supplies from nearly two dozen countries in Central Asia, the Middle East and their periphery, a projection of American power in the center of the Eurasian land mass that has no historical precedent.”⁵¹ Both American and Russian combat forces are now stationed in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Russian President Vladimir Putin has publicly supported the deployment of American troops on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Unfortunately, he wants their stay to be brief and to move on once the mission in the region is completed.

Why has the United States not focused attention on the drug trade in the region? On August 15, 2003, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said that “opium production in Afghanistan has gone up since the fall of the Taliban regime and he does not know how to curb it.”⁵² Additionally he stated, “And you ask what we are going to do, and the answer is, I don’t really know...I think it’s an awfully tough problem.”⁵³ Mr. Rumsfeld said the Afghan heroin was a bigger problem for Europe and Russia rather than the US because it’s mainly smuggled to the European nations. He said Britain has taken the lead in trying to curb the production of opium, which is used for making heroin, in Afghanistan because “they have the greatest concern about it...The United States has offered to help the UK.”⁵⁴ He does not want the “over-stretched 8,000 US soldiers in

⁵¹ Martin, Patrick. “US Bases Pave the Way For Long-Term Intervention in Central Asia.” *World Socialist Web Site*, 11 January 2002, p. 1.

⁵² “US Cannot Curb Opium Output: Rumsfeld on Afghanistan Situation.” *Afghan.com*, 16 August 2003, p. 1.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 1.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 1.

Afghanistan to become sidetracked from their main goal: to capture and kill terrorists. And chasing drug smugglers could take away allies from the Americans.”⁵⁵

Unfortunately, Britain has their hands full and they are not making good progress. “British-led plans to destroy Afghan opium poppy farming, responsible for 90% of the UK’s heroin supply, have made little progress so far, UN figures will show next month.”⁵⁶ Britain, who is responsible for the international coordination of the fight against the Afghan drug trade, is “to call a donors’ conference to raise extra funds to combat the Afghan economy’s dependence on opium production.”⁵⁷ The conference will also examine alternative livelihoods for desperately poor farmers attracted to the profitable opium market. The conference, which will most likely be held in Afghanistan, will bring the major agencies together including the UN, the Aid Development Bank, the World Bank and the European Union, as well as, individual countries. Britain has already provided “nearly 300m pounds to Afghanistan over three years, including 70m pounds just to fight drugs.”⁵⁸ United Kingdom’s Prime Minister Tony Blair has even appealed to the Russians to help fight the international drugs trade, which he fears has become a major source of funds for terrorists. Mr. Blair told the EU-Russian summit in St Petersburg “that the international drugs trade was increasingly related to terrorism and the risk that terrorists might get their hands on weapons of mass destruction.”⁵⁹

H. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The drug trade has and is continuing to plague Afghanistan and Tajikistan due to the difficulties each country is having politically, economically and community wide. Steps are being taken to try and alleviate the problems being faced by the regions, but progress is slow (if any). As for Tajikistan, they have been able to stabilize their government somewhat since the civil unrest they faced between 1992 and 1997. Political stability and economic growth was at the forefront of revisionist planning for creating a sound state. Government restructure has been progressing along steadily and Tajikistan

⁵⁵ McGirk, Tim. “Drugs? What Drugs?” *Time*, 18 August 2003, p. 23.

⁵⁶ Wintour, Patrick. “Britain losing new Afghan opium war.” *The Guardian*, 07 August 2003, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 1.

⁵⁹ McSmith, Andy. “Afghan drugs trade funds terrorists.” *Afghan.com*, 01 June 2003, p. 1.

has seen and continues to see a 7 percent annual increase in GDP since the Civil War.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, several matters remain untouched or are in need of attention and these factors are keeping Tajikistan from being able to escape economic frustrations.

So how has Tajikistan experienced such a strong growth with increases in GDP averaging 7 percent annually since the end of the civil war in 1997? Much of this growth has been based on the recovery of traditional exports like aluminum and cotton. There are signs that light manufacturing and private farming are also expanding. The strong growth in recent years will only be sustained if structural reform is accelerated. Until now, “structural reform has been erratic due to narrow base of ownership, weak institutions, uneven political support, inexperience, and a reform agenda that was perhaps too ambitious for the immediate post-civil war period.”⁶¹ Given the important link between structural reform and economic growth, Tajikistan’s program places great weight on strong structural policies.

There are major challenges facing Tajikistan’s economic reform process, which are, “(a) enhancing stabilization through better implementation of fiscal and monetary policy; (b) achieving more extensive ownership of core structural reforms; and (c) restructuring debt and improving debt management.”⁶² Progress in these areas will be supported by a proposed three-year poverty reduction arrangement that is being requested.

Tajikistan’s history and geography have made its internal policies particularly sensitive to foreign relations. “Afghanistan continues to cast a pall of uncertainty over the future, representing both opportunity (increased trade possibilities) and threats (drugs, a resurgence of violence south of the border).”⁶³ The increased U.S. presence in Central Asia and Afghanistan is also having an impact, as the government feels more secure in diversifying its foreign policy, particularly away from Russia. Nevertheless, Russia

⁶⁰ Van Dyck, Miriam. “World Bank: World Bank Launches New Strategy of Assistance for Tajikistan; Program Envisages Support Of Up To US \$80 Million Over Next Three Years.” *M2 Presswire*, 28 February 2003, p. 2.

⁶¹ “IMF: IMF Approves Three Year, US\$87 Million Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility Arrangement For The Republic of Tajikistan.” *M2 Presswire*, 12 December 2002, p. 2.

⁶² IMF, p. 2.

⁶³ ICG, p. 2.

retains considerable influence, primarily through its troops and border guards present in the country, but also because Tajikistan is economically dependent, particularly its informal economy. In financial terms, international institutions are becoming much more important than Russia, which is unable or unwilling to offer funding. This competition for influence will also have an impact on development. The United States and Russia need to collaborate with other nations to stop the increase in drug trafficking across the Tajikistan/Afghanistan border.

This chapter discussed why drug trafficking has shifted to Tajikistan, the economics involved, the effects of drug production and trafficking and why the United States and Russia should concern themselves with the problems. Chapter III will show why the Afghanistan-Tajikistan cross-border trafficking is center of gravity. Additionally, it will analyze the trafficking groups and routes in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Chapter IV will examine the strategies and capacities of the border agencies and how they fall short. Chapter V will offer policy recommendations and conclusions.

III. TRAFFICKING ROUTES AND GROUPS

A. INTRODUCTION

Geography and history make Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan attractive areas for drug traffic. These states are situated between the world's largest illicit opium producers and the most lucrative markets in Western Europe. The countries borders are located in close proximity to "the countries of the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran), and, via China, have access to the countries of the Golden Triangle (Burma, Laos, and Thailand), which are the world's largest producers of illicit opiates."⁶⁴

The conditions of the breakup of the Soviet Union created a natural camouflage that worked to the drug dealers' advantage. The region was an untapped market and an enormous attraction for traders from throughout the world. "In the early 1990's goods coming to Europe from the former Soviet Union were not looked upon as suspicious and were not subjected to rigorous inspections at their European destinations, while those coming from Southwest Asia were usually suspected of narcotics contraband and were thoroughly checked."⁶⁵ The fact that all of the countries of the region are members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was an added benefit. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are members of the Central Asian Economic Community. "Though most of these organizations are largely just '*de jure*' creations, they still make drug trafficking easier by, for example, maintaining a visa-free travel regime for the citizens of the CIS countries, as well as by having various bilateral agreements that facilitate free trade between countries."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Olcott, Martha Brill and Natalia Udalova. "Working Papers: Drug trafficking on the Great Silk Road: The Security Environment in Central Asia." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, Washington D.C., Number 11, March 2000, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 11.

⁶⁶ Chernograev, Yuri. "Russia Struggles with Bolivian Drug Mafia on the Tajik-Afghan Border." *Kommersant Daily*, December 17, 1999, p. 11.

The history and geography pre-determined a “flood of drugs into the region, and between 1992 and 1996 opium transportation through the region increased 13.5 times.”⁶⁷ It is two-way traffic with opium, morphine, heroin, and cannabis going to Europe, and precursors and synthetic drugs flowing back. Today, drug trafficking is reaching all time levels and Afghanistan and Central Asia have a strong market for supplying the West.

This chapter will establish why the Afghanistan-Tajikistan cross-border trafficking is the center of gravity and then analyze trafficking groups and routes in Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

B. DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS

The ongoing process of globalization only exacerbates many of the problems associated with drug trade. Improved communication has increased human mobility and has spread the pattern of drugs to other regions. There is a tendency for drug dealers and traffickers in various countries to unite to create transnational crime organizations and divide up the territory. Now researchers are seeing that the number of criminal groups involved in drug trafficking is on the rise.

In 1998 Kyrgyzstan had 64 drug trafficking crime groups. During the first three months of 1999 law enforcement agents had already discovered 35 similar groups.⁶⁸

The Kazakh Security Committee identified 125 organized crime groups operating in Central Asia, 30 of which were involved in drug trafficking in Kazakhstan alone.⁶⁹

The following examples will display many of the difficulties affecting each one of the Central Asian states. First, organized drug groups, such as Tajikistan’s Islamic opposition and Pamiri population, prey on weaknesses within government institutions and work towards further destabilizing the situation to make drug trafficking easier and to scare off international observers and advisors. They provide funds for warring factions in internal conflicts, Islamic opposition groups, and terrorist groups. They also corrupt

⁶⁷ Council on Foreign and Defense Policy of the Russian Federation. “Drug Proliferation in Russia.” Report, 1997, p. 4.

⁶⁸ Olcott and Udalova, p. 18.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 18.

governments and undermine the social fabric by involving women and children in dangerous trafficking activities.

Just like in neighboring Afghanistan, it appears that warring factions in Tajikistan have turned to drug trafficking to raise money to finance their military campaigns. In particular, Uzbek opposition groups that were pushed out of Tajikistan as part of the reconciliation process, most predominantly those led by Djuma Namangani, have now taken refuge in Kyrgyzstan, pulling the southern and mountainous part of their country in to the whirlwind of drug-related and other criminal activity.⁷⁰ “Djuma Namangani controls about 70 percent of the drugs moving via the northern route.”⁷¹

The radical Islamic groups in Uzbekistan are fronts for drug rings. Law enforcement officers may plant drugs on the person or property of political opponents or religious figures and then prosecute them on trumped-up drug charges. The courts rarely challenge police accounts or forced confessions, particularly in trials with political repercussions. The crackdown on the Islamic Movement Uzbekistan (IMU) has made use of these tactics to increase sentences since drug trafficking carries some of the most severe penalties, including death.⁷²

Numerous opposition Islamic groups have controlled Tajikistan’s Badakshan region. This mountainous region encompasses about 40 percent of Tajikistan’s territory and is ill suited to both agriculture and industry.⁷³ The region also has the lowest absolute population density in the country, “with 3.2 people per square kilometer.”⁷⁴ International drug traders could not find a more hospitable economic situation.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 11. Note: Djuma Namangani (Khojiev) is a leader of the Uzbek Islamic Movement responsible for the August 1999 hostage taking in Batken. The core of the military unit under his command (200-250 fighters as of 1998) consists of natives of the eastern Uzbek town of Namangan. He is rumored to have received military training in Afghanistan and Chechnya and spiritual guidance in Saudi Arabia.

⁷¹ Razgulyaev, Yuri. “Drug Mafia Has Received a Green Light: The Kyrgyz Authorities are Removing the Last Obstacle in the Way of Tajik and Afghan Heroin.” *Vremya MN*, October 20, 1999, p. 8.

⁷² Lubin, Nancy, Alex Klaitis, Igor Barsegian. “Narcotics Interdiction in Afghanistan and Central Asia.” *Open Society Institute*, New York, Herlin Press, Inc., 2002, p. 16.

⁷³ Olcott and Udalova, p. 12.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 12.

Another group in the Central Asian region, predominately in Tajikistan, is the Lesha Gorbaty's Group.⁷⁵ They have spread themselves throughout the region and made it a lifestyle for drug trafficking. The group's leader was killed four years ago in a bomb explosion, but the Lesha Gorbaty Group continues drug trafficking from Afghanistan and transports the goods throughout the Central Asian region.

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and Albanian drug barons who control "the Balkan route" of drug trafficking in Europe are also very interested with the drug trafficking that occurs in Central Asia.⁷⁶ Both organizations want to ensure that trade routes remain open in order to keep money and arms coming into their country. Additionally, Iranian drug lords are very interested in drug trafficking from Afghanistan and Central Asia. One particular drug lord, Hajj Ghulam Baloch, has spent years financing warring Afghanistan factions.⁷⁷

Similarly, it has been reported that Osama bin-Laden financed his terrorist activities with profits from his opium syndicate that operated from western Afghanistan. It has also been reported that he considered opium a powerful weapon in the Jihad (Holy War). Indian intelligence agencies reported that bin Laden controlled about "60 illegal heroin laboratories."⁷⁸

Whether or not bin Laden was directly involved in drug trafficking is less important than the fact that the drug industry was and is an important outlet for organized crime in the region. When there is a demand there will always be a supply. Due to the fact that there are so many organized crime units and drug trafficking organizations within the region, it is no wonder that corruption plagued many of the countries. Similarly, according to Interpol, the drug mafia controls governments of at least 12 countries.⁷⁹ Five of the twelve are active in the Central Asian region. In addition, Russia is becoming increasingly concerned about drugs being delivered to its territory by mafia groups from Central Asia and the Caucasus and now realizes that they are part of the

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 13.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 24.

⁷⁷ *The Nation*. September 30, 1997, as reported by FBIS-TDD-97-275, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Olcott and Udalova, p. 24.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 24.

loop. Additionally, Afghan groups, in general, do not appear to participate in lucrative international drug trafficking operations. The involvement of Afghan groups/individuals is basically limited to the opium production, the trade of opium within Afghanistan, the transformation of some of the opium into morphine and heroin, and to some extent, the trafficking of opiates (opium, morphine, heroin) to neighboring countries (Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

In recent years women have been getting more and more actively involved in drug trafficking in Tajikistan. Official statistics indicate,

That whereas in 1993, of those people found to have committed crimes involving drug dealing, 29 were women, in 1998 this number had increased to 114. The number of men committing crimes during this period doubled, while the number of women in the same category quadrupled.⁸⁰

Since 1996 the share of women in drug trafficking has increased from “3 percent to 12.2 percent in Kazakhstan; women constituted 35 percent of those convicted of drug crimes in 1998 in Tajikistan and 12.4 percent in Kyrgyzstan.”⁸¹ In 1999 the data on women’s increasing involvement in drug trafficking grew even worse. According to data from the “Information Department of the Tajikistan Internal Affairs Ministry regarding criminal cases which were brought to completion, in 1997, 63 women were the objects of criminal prosecution, in 1998, 83 women, and in 1999, 177 women.”⁸² Although the proportion of women involved in smuggling is still small, and their growth rate relatively modest, Tajik television and the press in particular have focused on the involvement of women in drug trafficking.

An inquiry into the reasons why women get involved in drug trafficking finds that the majority of women commit drug trafficking crimes because they are/were in dire economic straits and that they wanted to make “big” money. Also, many of those women in Tajikistan are war widows with multiple children and no legitimate means of earning a living. Additionally, women will usually accept less pay for their courier services. “But some husbands reportedly also push their second or third wives to become traffickers to

⁸⁰ “Women and Drugs in Tajikistan,” *Eurasianet*, 17 December 2002, p. 2.

⁸¹ Olcott and Udalova, p. 18.

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 2.

better provide for the family; some women are ‘conned’ by more seasoned traffickers; and some women find their children kidnapped until they agree to carry narcotics from one location to another.”⁸³

Women are recruited or forced into drug trafficking for many reasons. In case of arrest they are less likely to give up their supplies because of a stronger desire to protect families, and they are more likely to get shorter sentences due to the courts’ general leniency toward women, particularly toward those with children. Also, “women are set up to be caught as the ‘cover up,’ or ‘shirma,’ allowing customs officials to look the other way and let the ‘big fish’ continue unhampered.”⁸⁴ With corruption and collusion widespread between customs officials and drug traffickers, customs officials are sometimes informed beforehand who to search so that the traffickers carrying large amounts of drugs can pass through without detection.

People in Central Asia also worry about consequences of the drug trade on family life and traditional communities. Trafficking involving children is becoming a growing concern. There has been evidence of fathers attempting to hide heroin in children’s shoes and the “discovery of three kilos of opium tied to the thighs of three children, ages 9 to 13, traveling with their mother.”⁸⁵ Drug trafficking involving children has grown dramatically.

C. DRUG CULTIVATION AND TRAFFICKING ROUTES - AFGHANISTAN

Why are Afghanistan and Central Asia playing such a major role in the growing and exporting of opium and heroin? This section shows why drug production in the region has been able to flourish and why there are so many routes that drug traffickers take.

Trafficking patterns need to be analyzed in order to understand the various trafficking routes that traders use. An obvious finding concerns the massive extent to which countries neighboring Afghanistan (Iran, Pakistan and the countries of Central Asia) are affected by drug trafficking activities.

⁸³ Lubin, et al., p. 17.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 17.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 18.

In 2000 the ‘neighboring countries’ of Afghanistan were responsible for 61% of global seizures of opiates. Taking all the opiate seizures of the regions that are strongly affected by Afghanistan’s opium production, i.e. Europe, the Near & Middle East and Central Asia, the ‘neighboring countries’ of Afghanistan accounted for 71% of the opiate seizures in these three regions in 2000.⁸⁶

By comparison, the ‘neighboring countries’ accounted in 2000 for 22% of the population of the three regions or just 1% of the aggregated GDP of these three regions, clearly indicating the economic burden put on these countries by drug trafficking.⁸⁷

In 2001, “56% of total opiate seizures in Afghanistan’s neighboring countries were made by Iran, followed by Pakistan (28%).”⁸⁸ In recent years the Central Asian countries, in particular Tajikistan where the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has developed a special-purpose project, reported the biggest increase in seizures. There is also evidence of increased heroin manufacture within Afghanistan, reflected in heroin seizures in neighboring countries.

In 2002 the largest gross profits from trafficking were made by criminal groups from Central Asia (\$2.2 billion, equivalent to 7% of the area’s GDP). Gross trafficking profits in Iran were estimated at \$1 to \$1.3 billion, equivalent to 1% to 1.3% of GDP. For Pakistan, they were estimated at \$400 to \$800 million, equivalent to 0.7% to 1.3% of GDP.⁸⁹

An exploration of the Afghanistan region is necessary in order to see how easily it is to grow, cultivate and transport opium to out-lying areas. Afghanistan is known for its vast terrain that goes from low-lying valleys to high mountain ranges. River systems throughout the region provide a means for drug producers to irrigate their crops. Afghanistan has many mountain rivers that provide the water necessary to grow opium. A couple of rivers in Afghanistan, the Pyandzh and the Kunduz are famous for opium

⁸⁶ Chawla, Sandeep, Thomas Pietschmann, Thibault le Pichon, Aruna Nathwani, Johny Thomas, and Melissa Tullis. “The Opium Economy in Afghanistan.” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, New York, 2003, p. 152.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 152.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 14.

⁸⁹ International Crisis Group (ICG). “Central Asia: Drugs and Conflict.” *ICG Asia Report No. 25*, Osh/Brussels, 26 November 2001, p. 15. Note: This data is provided as an example of the shift in drug trafficking from Iran and Pakistan. Chapter II described the economic aspects of drug trafficking in greater detail.

cultivation and trafficking. It is possible to grow and cultivate opium in the mountains and valleys of Afghanistan due to the vast amount of farmers and lack of government control over the crops they produce.

The northern portion of Afghanistan has and is becoming a major focal point of law enforcement personnel and drug fighting institutions due to the shift in the drug trade in this region. Though this area is not as large as the southern portion of the country, its impact on drug trafficking is significant. The northern Afghan border makes a long run through the mountainous region. It is not feasible to build guard towers and footprint lines on this portion. This region,

Which includes Takhar and most of Badakhshan province, produces the biggest share of northern Afghanistan's heroin. Traffickers carry it into neighboring Kunduz, which consists predominantly of steppes and semiarid land.⁹⁰

People carry poppies to the river for cultivation; like wheat or barley, opium poppies require irrigation systems. Villagers along the Kunduz River who used to trade cotton and sesame seeds with Pakistani wholesalers have begun growing and selling poppy.

Poppy requires less effort in cultivation than grain and in Badakhshan, where a mountain foot serves as a border; the road crosses poppy fields as it climbs. Any land on the mountain slope that promises any use for cultivation is ploughed up, seeded with poppy, and tilled. Villagers have even moved soil and covered stones, using buffaloes and donkeys, to clear more land. They distribute soil in a thick layer so that the stones are fully covered and poppy roots have enough space to grow. When spring rains destroy this layer of fertile soil, farmers repeat the process for the next season. Farmers say soil lasts two or three seasons, then must lie fallow for three or four years.

Traditionally the bulk of opium poppy cultivation was in the south (Helmand province, 52% of total cultivation in 2000) and the east (Nangarhar, 24%). In 2001, the Taliban ban pushed the output to the north (Badakhshan, 83%, though of a far lower total). In 2002 the largest areas under cultivation were again Helmand (40%), Nangarhar (27%) and

⁹⁰ ICG, p. 17.

Badakshan (11%), followed by Uruzgan (7%), Kandahar (5%), and Ghor (3%).⁹¹

Thus 93% of the area under poppy cultivation is restricted to six provinces that have not yet complied with the ban issued by the Government in January 2002.⁹²

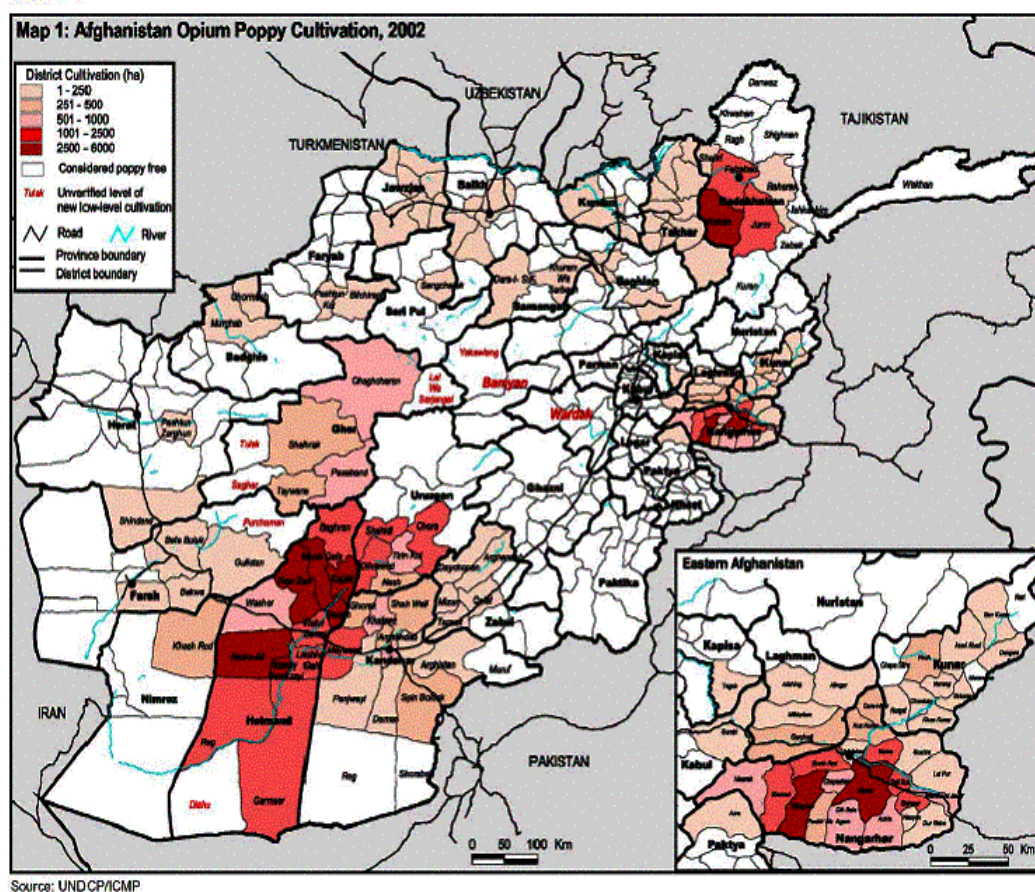


Figure 4. **Afghanistan Opium Poppy Cultivation - 2002**⁹³

The area under poppy cultivation is a tiny fraction of the arable land in Afghanistan (when looking at the size of the state as compared to the area being cultivated). Even in the poppy growing villages, “only 8% of the arable land was used for opium cultivation in 2000, though in Helmand and Nangarhar the rates were significantly higher (about one-third of arable land).”⁹⁴ The northern provinces, which

⁹¹ Chawla, p. 6.

⁹² Ibid, p. 6.

⁹³ Ibid, p. 7. Note: The figure shows the growth of opium poppy cultivation in the northern provinces.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 6.

are rain-fed and generally easy to cultivate, provide an easy avenue for drugs to reach their destination markets. The southern portion of Afghanistan is still a very ideal location for poppy cultivation. Even today the bulk of poppy cultivation takes place on irrigated land in the south, where productivity can be 3-4 times higher than in the rain-fed provinces of the north. Statistics are showing that the northern provinces are growing at a faster rate than the south and trends will continue as long as the drug mafia has access to trafficking routes to sell their drugs.

Northern Afghanistan has also become an important location for stocks of opiates in recent years. Price patterns and intelligence reports agree that this is the case. “In 2001 opium prices were temporarily lower in the border regions between Badakhshan and Tajikistan than the average prices that farmers in other parts of Badakhshan could obtain for selling their fresh opium.”⁹⁵ This can only be explained by the existence of important stocks in the border region. In 2001, Tajik villagers emerged as the main producers of opiates in Afghanistan. Once in Tajikistan, opiates are usually trafficked on to other Central Asian countries, as well as, to several towns of the Russian Federation and other CIS countries, often by rail and often organized by criminal Tajik groups in Tajikistan or other CIS countries.

Due to the rapid increase in poppy growth and production, it is estimated that there are “61 other heroin factories in northern Afghanistan that produce the deadly narcotic...they operate with the compliance, and possibly the protection, of the warlords the US-led bombing campaign helped bring to power.”⁹⁶ Regional drug control officials say the war on terror has not only failed to destroy the illegal narcotics trade, it “has inadvertently helped restore it to the levels that preceded the Taliban’s ban on poppy cultivation in 2000, when Afghanistan produced 75 percent of the world’s opium supply.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Chawla, p. 51.

⁹⁶ Filipov, David. “Drug Trade Flourishes Again in Afghanistan.” *The Boston Globe*, 13 October 2002, p. 12.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 12.

D. MARKETS

Over the last twenty years (1980-2000) Afghanistan's opium markets were somewhat fragmented. The weakness of the central administration, the country's segmentation into clans and tribes, and the poor transport infrastructure splintered the trade. "Domestic markets were also affected by cross-border trafficking: conditions in neighboring countries (prices, routes and risks) shaped Afghanistan's own terms of trade and trading structures."⁹⁸

In eastern markets (Nangarhar province), prices tended to be higher than in the south due to an oligopolistic market structure. Southern markets were decentralized, atomistic and highly competitive, with lower prices. In the north, opium prices were typically high because of better quality and strongly rising demand in Central Asia and Russia. "In recent years (2000-2002) price differentials have, however, declined: Afghanistan's fragmented opium trade, now increasingly influenced by international syndicates and criminal groups, may be on the way to becoming a single integrated market."⁹⁹

E. CENTRAL ASIAN ROUTES - TAJIKISTAN

It is now necessary to look at the Central Asian drug trafficking routes in detail to discuss the extent of routes throughout this region. The smaller countries of Central Asia have been particularly vulnerable to criminal organizations and the influx of drug trafficking throughout the region. Drug trafficking routes have been spreading throughout the region for over a decade now and affects can be seen in each one of the five countries. Corruption, violence and dirty money, which include financial support for terrorist organizations, have had negative repercussions for legitimate governments and investment. Therefore, each one of the countries has a weak political and economic structure. Drug barons and criminal organizations take advantage of these situations and utilize weaknesses to create their strengths. Particular emphasis will be placed on Tajikistan and the numerous supply lines throughout their region.

⁹⁸ Chawla, p. 8.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 8.

The new drug trade made its strongest initial routes into Tajikistan, where the situation was exacerbated by civil war between 1992-97. Tajikistan is still recovering from its civil war, which left much of the country's already impoverished economy in ruins. Part of the Tajik population fled the fighting into Afghanistan, thus indirectly facilitating development of new transport networks. By 1996, when the Taliban took control of most of Afghanistan, there were numerous poppy fields in that country and well established drug routes throughout. The combination of its long border with Afghanistan and its barely functioning economy has made it the main gateway into Central Asia, Russia, Eastern and Western Europe for Afghan opium and heroin.

Countries of Central Asia only started to report significant seizures as of the late 1990s. A strong increase and a clear concentration of seizures among the countries of Central Asia has been found in Tajikistan, reflecting increased trafficking from Afghanistan to the north, as well as improvements of the enforcement capacity of Tajikistan in recent years.

Some 60% of all Afghan drugs entering Tajikistan are trafficked across the flat terrain of the Afghan-Tajik border (via Pynaj, Moskowsky, Nizhni Pyanj, Shuruabad, Parhar). The remaining 40% of the drugs are trafficked via the mountainous Gorno-Badakshan Autonomous Region (through Ishkashim, Khorog, Roushan and Kalay Khumb).¹⁰⁰

Tajikistan was in recent years particularly affected by trafficking of heroin, following the establishment of a number of repositories and clandestine heroin laboratories in northern Afghanistan close to the Tajik border. A reverse traffic of precursor chemicals apparently runs from other Central Asian countries and/or the Russian Federation for the manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan.

With regard to Central Asia the 'typical trafficking profits' are derived from purchasing opium and heroin in Tajikistan, in the border areas with northern Afghanistan, and selling the opium within Central Asia and the heroin in the Russian Federation. While the profits made from opium trafficking are minimal, gross profits made by shipping heroin to Moscow and selling it there are huge. Intelligence information, as well as, arrest statistics indeed show a very strong involvement of criminal groups of Central Asian origin in this trade: "92% of drug smugglers arrested at Russia's borders in

¹⁰⁰ Chawla, p. 158.

1999 had a Central Asian background; 75% were Tajiks, 9% Uzbeks, 4% Kazakhs, 3% from Kyrgyzstan and 1% were from Turkmenistan.”¹⁰¹

While heroin and morphine seizures showed an upward trend over the last two decades, heroin seizures only started to increase strongly as of the late 1990s, reflecting increasing levels of heroin manufacture within Afghanistan. In 2001, morphine seizures declined in the region, mainly due to falling morphine seizures in Iran. Improved heroin manufacture capacity meant that morphine was increasingly transformed into heroin within Afghanistan. Thus heroin seizures continued to increase in 2001. There was, however, a shift in the trafficking routes. Heroin trafficking via Central Asia increased while trafficking via Iran lost in importance. Heroin purity declined in the region in 2001, but rose again in the following year. This was a reflection of Afghanistan’s large opium harvest in 2002. The strongest growth rates - by far - in heroin seizures in recent years were reported from the Central Asian countries, notably from Tajikistan. “Tajikistan was the only country in the region which showed rising levels of heroin seizures in 2001, reflecting shifts in trafficking routes towards northern Afghanistan, and thus further on to Tajikistan, and improved enforcement efforts by the authorities of Tajikistan.”¹⁰²

A closer look at the trafficking routes that plague Tajikistan will now be described. To begin with, it was widely believed that the road from Kharog in Tajikistan to Osh in Kyrgyzstan was the most commonly used road for smuggling Afghan opium through Central Asia and on to Russia. Of the six known trafficking routes operating in 2001, two run through Pakistan and Iran, four through Central Asia.¹⁰³ Three of the four in Central Asia are considered to be in Tajikistan, the other in Turkmenistan. One such road, the Kharog-Osh road, became one of the first focuses of regional and international anti-drug efforts. When one drug route would become difficult for transport it led to the opening of another.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p. 166.

¹⁰² Ibid, p. 159.

¹⁰³ McDermott, Roger N., “Border Security in Tajikistan: Countering the Narcotics Trade?” *Conflict Studies Research Center*, October 2002, p. 18.

The areas around Panj and Moskovskii are now considered the main avenues through which drugs enter Tajikistan from Afghanistan, while the significance of the Kharog-Osh road has considerably diminished. Since Tajikistan remains the key area for Central Asia's anti-drug efforts, focus has been centered on the main entry points of the towns of Panj and Moskovskii. From these towns, the route proceeds to Dushanbe or Khujand. Next, from Dushanbe, drugs are usually shipped out to Moscow or Eastern Europe and from Khujand to Siberian cities such as Novosibirsk, Omsk and other Russian eastern areas. The route through Moskovskii goes to Osh, then Kazakhstan and on to Russia.¹⁰⁴

Local officials refuse to discuss the transport of heroin between Tajikistan and Afghanistan and onward throughout Russia and Europe (with emphasis placed on the old "Silk Route"), but observers can see drugs travel frequently along another route between Badakhshan and Tajikistan's (similarly named) Gomo-Badakhshan oblast.

Sometimes these shipments travel close to trucks delivering humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. Traffickers choose landlocked crossings like the route between Ishkashim, Afghanistan and Horoga, Tajikistan, which includes three guards along 160 kilometers. As Tajiks and their Russian trainers watch the Pyandzh, this sort of flow is likely to gain speed and volume.¹⁰⁵

In addition to the many routes already mentioned, the geography of the region plays a very important role in drug trafficking. For instance, the Kyrgyz border with Tajikistan is difficult to patrol since "large parts of it are more than 13,000 feet above sea level and temperatures fall to -40 degrees Fahrenheit in winter."¹⁰⁶ Only a few roads cut across the region, and until recently, they were all in bad repair. There is a way around this and drug traffickers know these routes.

Anyone with a horse, any other pack animal, a helicopter, or a plane is effectively able to evade detection. This has made drug trafficking a

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 18.

¹⁰⁵ "Drug Trafficking via Central Asia Rising Sharply," *The Times of Central Asia*, 21 September 2000, p. 34. Note: The border delima in Tajikistan will be described in greater detail in Chapter IV. The above example shows why traffickers choose certain locations.

¹⁰⁶ Olcott, Martha Brill and Natalia Udalova. "Working Papers - Drug Trafficking on the Great Silk Road: The Security Environment in Central Asia." *Carnegie Endowment Working Papers*, Number 11, March 2000, p. 12.

pursuit of the well-connected (to military and security) as well as of the poor, while crippling those who take seriously enforcing the law.¹⁰⁷

Drugs continue being trafficked from Tajikistan via the border near Khojand into the Syrdarya Oblast or via the southern route into the Sukhandarya Oblast in Uzbekistan. Significant trafficking was also reported on the Dushanbe-Moscow train. Another major route goes from Gorno-Badakshan region of Tajikistan, through Osh in Kyrgyzstan, and into Uzbekistan's Ferghana Valley. (Indeed, most seizures in Kyrgyzstan continue to take place in Batken and Osh provinces).

Prior to 1998 and the closing of the border between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan opiates were also directly trafficked from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan. As this border ("Friendship Bridge" on the Amudarya river) was opened again after the fall of the Taliban regime, one might expect trafficking along this route as well.¹⁰⁸

Uzbekistan is also considered a main transit country for Afghanistan's opiates, but they enter primarily via Tajikistan rather than across the direct border. Uzbekistan is better protected along its 450-kilometer border with Afghanistan than is Tajikistan because the Amu-Darya River is a natural obstacle. There is a considerable less amount of drugs smuggled through this area of Central Asia. Given Tajikistan's enhanced heroin hauls, Uzbekistan's apparent decline as a drugs route may be an indication that smugglers are more frequently flying their merchandise directly out of the region from Tajikistan.

Railways linking Kazakhstan with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation are considered to be the most important trafficking channels via Kazakhstan. Important entry points into Kazakhstan are the rail crossing points of Rays (on the border with Uzbekistan) and Biney (on the border with Turkmenistan).¹⁰⁹

Drug traffic via motor vehicles enters Kazakhstan mostly by crossing the border in Chimkent, Jambil or Almaty provinces. Most of the drugs going to Russia by rail or by vehicles cross the Russian border in the direction of Astrakhan, Orenburg, Chelyabinsk, Omsk and Novosibirsk.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Olcott and Udalova, p. 12.

¹⁰⁸ Chawla, Sandeep, Thomas Pietschmann, Thibault le Pichon, Aruna Nathwani, Johny Thomas, and Melissa Tullis. "The Opium Economy in Afghanistan." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, New York, 2003, p. 158.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 158.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 158.

The drug traffickers in the region are able to shift their routes very easily when law enforcement tries to stop their dealings. The countries of the region do not have the means to cope with drug trafficking. Customs and border posts have no modern equipment or even weapons. At the Tajik-Kyrgyz border there is very little or no control.¹¹¹ The Murgab part of the Tajik-Afghan border is largely open. The Khorog-Osh road is “about 750 kilometers long and connects Tajikistan (Gorno Badakhshan) with the southern part of Kyrgyzstan (Sari-Tash and Osh), allowing easy access to Andijan (Uzbekistan).”¹¹² The route is also an important connection with China. There have been efforts to control the Sari-Tash post, but this attempt has led to drug smugglers changing routes and going from the Badakhshan region (in Kyrgyzstan) towards Dara-Ut-Kurgan of the Chon Alai region and further down to Kyzyl-Kiya, Uzgen, and Jalal-Abad (in Kyrgyzstan) and then to Uzbekistan.¹¹³

Another region that drug traffickers are particularly fond of is the “green border” between Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. This area was named the green border because of its transparency. Turkmenistan shares a border of 744 kilometers with Afghanistan.¹¹⁴ Drug trafficking routes through the area easier to monitor due to the geography of the region. The shorter border region with Afghanistan helps officials monitor the drug trade in the region. Drug traffickers still find ways to get their supplies by border officials, but they tend to find the path of least resistance. “Some 80 tons of heroin are estimated to enter Turkmenistan each year with about 30 percent staying in the country.”¹¹⁵ These amounts are far fewer than the numbers Tajikistan sees in a year. Therefore, drug traffickers continue to utilize Tajikistan to their advantage.

The Eastern European region plays a central role as a transit area for heroin trafficking. Heroin is smuggled into the whole of Europe from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey through Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav republics, Romania and

¹¹¹ A detailed description of border control issues and developments will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV of the thesis.

¹¹² Olcott and Udalova, p. 13.

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 13.

¹¹⁴ ICG, p. 16.

¹¹⁵ Gulshen, Ashirova, “Turkmenistan in the Path of Afghan Drug Expansion,” *The Times of Central Asia*, 26 July 2001, p. 14.

Hungary — the so-called ‘Balkan route’ — and from the Central Asian states through Russia, the Ukraine, Poland and the Baltic states along the so-called ‘silk route.’ Law-enforcement agencies estimate “that at least 80 % of the heroin available in Europe is transported along the Baltic and Balkan routes.”¹¹⁶

According to the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODC),

80 % of heroin consumed in Western Europe comes from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Half of this drug (about 120 tons of heroin equivalent) comes to Europe via Central Asia and Eastern and Central Europe.¹¹⁷

During 2000, Germany’s role in the ‘silk route’ was probably reinforced, since it is not only a consumer country but also a significant gateway en route to the consumer markets of the European Union.

When one route disappears, another route quickly appears, thus continuing the trafficking of drugs with an uninterrupted flow. So many drugs are transported throughout the region that attempts to stop the flow of drugs throughout the region goes unnoticed.

F. ETHNIC GROUPS AND ROUTES

Ethnic links have not only played an important role in the expansion of poppy cultivation, they have also been crucial in setting up networks for cross-border trafficking, thus providing the infrastructure for the opiate industry to flourish. Such networks have to rely on trust, and being of the same ethnic group provides this.

Thus, irrespective of a general trend towards globalization, most cross-border smuggling operations – worldwide - continue to be organized along ethnic lines. Afghanistan is no exception in this regard.¹¹⁸

A variety of ethnic groups are involved in opium production though there seems to be a concentration among Pashtun and Tajik villages located in the main opium producing regions of southern, eastern and northern Afghanistan. Opium cultivation spread throughout the country in the 1990s, following the ethnic distribution of traveling

¹¹⁶ Andrushchak, Lidia, et al. “Drug Abuse and HIV/AIDS – Lessons Learned.” *UNDCP Annual Report*, April 2002, p. 16.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 17.

¹¹⁸ Chawla, et al., p. 52.

workers who disseminated the instruction for opium production. “Trafficking then spread to neighboring countries, facilitated by ethnic links across borders: Pashtuns in Pakistan; Baluchis in Pakistan and Iran; Tajiks in Tajikistan; Uzbeks in Uzbekistan; and Turkmens in Turkmenistan.”¹¹⁹

If one includes ethnically mixed villages with a Tajik population, Tajik opium production could be “also identified in Uruzgan (southern Afghanistan) and including such village’s data suggest that most ‘Tajik opium’ production might actually have taken place in Helmand province in southern Afghanistan, followed by Nangarhar province (eastern Afghanistan).”¹²⁰ Badakshan (northern Afghanistan) ranked only third. “A tentative estimate suggests that the proportion of Tajik villages in all opium producing villages increased from 9% in 1994 to 12% in 2000.”¹²¹ This is based on 2001 cultivation data and the assumption that, as in 1994,

2% of all villages in the Pashtun provinces were Tajik, 70% of all villages in Badakshan were Tajik, and that in provinces not covered by the 1994 survey, about 40% of opium producing villages in other parts of northern Afghanistan were Tajik. The figure thus calculated was 400 villages or 44% of all poppy-producing villages in 2001.¹²²

Though Badakhshan is the traditional center of Tajiks living in Afghanistan, and 82% of all Tajik poppy-producing villages were located in Badakhshan, only 28% of all opium produced by Tajik villages actually came from Badakhshan. The bulk (68%) was produced by Tajik villages located in Nangarhar (eastern Afghanistan).¹²³ In addition, the survey also found Tajik villages producing opium in Kunar and in Helmand province.

As one can see, ethnic ties in neighboring countries allow drug trafficking to be easier. Afghanistan has many ethnic ties with Tajikistan; therefore, drug trafficking through the region is to be expected. Since the end of the Tajik Civil War in 1997, many ethnic ties have kept the lines of communication open throughout the area. These close ties allow drugs to filter across the border without much resistance. Also, as discussed

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 7.

¹²⁰ Chawla, p. 51.

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 51.

¹²² Ibid, p. 51.

¹²³ Chawla, p. 51.

previously, ethnic ties with other states within the CIS allow drug to transport throughout that region with modest success.

G. DRUG PRECURSORS AND LABORATORIES

The following will show how laboratories and routes are directly tied to one another. The northern portion of Afghanistan is gaining strength and the amount of laboratories in the region proves that the drug trafficking routes are swinging north. Ethnic ties and the discrete laboratories in the region are creating a shift in drug trafficking.

It is believed that most precursors for the production of heroin in Afghanistan come from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan inherited pharmaceutical and chemical industries from the Soviet era. Acetic anhydride, the most commonly used chemical in the production of heroin, is produced legally in Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan also produces the chemical, and there are concerns over controls of its stocks.

On average, 22 tons of acetic anhydride is enough to make seven to ten tons of heroin. In 1998 over 16 tons of acetic anhydride was seized in Uzbekistan, while being illegally transported.¹²⁴

It was discovered that not all of the seized chemical was locally produced. In fact, some came from Russia and China, but all the shipments were bound for Afghanistan.

Originally, Afghanistan was only a producer of opium. As of the mid-1990s, however, heroin manufacture began to take place within Afghanistan. Most of the early morphine/heroin laboratories were located in eastern Afghanistan, having shifted across the border from neighboring Pakistan. "In subsequent years, heroin laboratories could be found in the border regions of most opium poppy growing areas, i.e. in eastern, southern and northern Afghanistan."¹²⁵ In particular in northern Afghanistan the bulk of opiates are now already smuggled out of the country in the form of heroin. Profitability considerations played a role. However, data also suggest that it was not so much

¹²⁴ "Drug Trafficking via Central Asia Rising Sharply," *The Times of Central Asia*, 21 September 2000, p. 22.

¹²⁵ Chawla, Sandeep, Thomas Pietschmann, Thibault le Pichon, Aruna Nathwani, Johny Thomas, and Melissa Tullis. "The Opium Economy in Afghanistan." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, New York, 2003, p. 132.

profitability as such, but the possibility of taking more profits per unit trafficked which led to the shift.

Heroin manufacture is very likely to have remained a lucrative business activity in Afghanistan for those clandestine laboratories which (i) had acquired sufficient opium stocks when the opium price was still low, or (ii) were not limited to selling their heroin to traders within Afghanistan but had a direct access to foreign heroin markets, or (iii) were able to adapt to falling profit margins by increasing their efficiency levels.¹²⁶

UNDCP is aware of a number of small-to medium scale laboratories operating in eastern and southern Afghanistan and, in recent years, increasingly in northern Afghanistan. Such laboratories, “which earlier had been set up in Pakistan and were later moved across the border to eastern Afghanistan, produce, on average, some 10 kg of brown heroin per day; they often produce only during a limited period (some 4 months), following the opium harvest.¹²⁷ In northern Afghanistan many of the newly set up laboratories are also small in size, often family run, producing between 5 and 10 kg of heroin a day. In addition, classified information suggests that there are also a number of large morphine/heroin laboratories in southern, eastern and northern Afghanistan which have been producing up to 150 kg of morphine base a day.¹²⁸ They produce morphine/heroin, in general, without interruption.

The above examples show how laboratories and routes are directly tied to one another. The northern portion of Afghanistan is gaining strength and the amount of laboratories in the region proves that the drug trafficking routes are swinging north. Ethnic ties and the discrete laboratories in the region are creating a shift in drug trafficking.

I. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Since the break up of the Soviet Union in the early 1990's, drug trafficking has increased dramatically in the Central Asian region. Afghanistan has increased production of opium/heroin in the region and has found trafficking routes that are able to get the

¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 139.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 139.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 139.

drugs out of their country into Central Asia, Russia, and Europe. Drug trafficking organizations keep the supply lines open and increasingly develop new ones as old ones get blocked.

Supply lines and trafficking routes that were once heavily used have been shifting to areas where drug traffickers are less likely to get caught and where border security is still a problem. For example, the share of “heroin seizures in Iran – disregarding Pakistan’s likely over-representation in these data - rose from around 15% over the 1994-96 period to almost half in 1999 before falling back to about a quarter in 2000/2001.”¹²⁹ The strongest growth in trafficking took place in Central Asia. “The share of the Central Asian countries’ seizures rose from less than 1% over the 1994-96 period to close to 30% of regional heroin seizures by the year 2001, reflecting the increased use of the northern route via Tajikistan as well as improvements in controlling borders with Afghanistan.”¹³⁰ The increase in trafficking and data on seizures show how Tajikistan is seeing a dramatic rise in drug trafficking across their border region with Afghanistan.

The example above shows how Central Asia, especially Tajikistan, is becoming a focal point for drug traffickers. Chapter II showed how there is a drug problem in Central Asia. Evidence showed there are problems, the reasons for the problems, and why it is a matter of concern to Russia and the United States. This chapter showed why the Afghanistan-Tajikistan cross-border trafficking is center of gravity. Additionally, it analyzed the trafficking groups and routes in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Chapter IV will examine the strategies and capacities of the border agencies and how they fall short. Chapter V will offer policy recommendations and conclusions.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 67.

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 67.

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IV. BORDER AGENCIES

A. INTRODUCTION

Geographical contiguity, racial and religious affinity and long established border trade have provided a strong basis for cross-border fraternization between the people of Central Asia and adjoining Afghanistan, particularly its northern part also known as Afghan Turkestan. Afghanistan not only shares its borders with the three Central Asian states of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, but the majority of people settled in northern Afghanistan are also of the Central Asian stock.

Tajikistan, a state that is completely landlocked, consists of very rough terrain that is comprised of mountains, cliffs and glaciers. There are very few transportation links through the area that gives Tajikistan limited access to neighboring countries. Security problems resulting from the increasing flow of narcotics illegally smuggled across the 1200 km Tajikistan-Afghanistan border have become critical in understanding the nature of political instability within Central Asia. Unfortunately, drug smuggling trade across the Tajikistan border has been flourishing without much intervention.

Chapter II established why the Afghanistan-Tajikistan cross-border trafficking is the center of gravity and then analyzed trafficking groups and routes in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Chapter III showed the growing shift in the drug trade from the eastern, western and southern routes to the northern route. Additionally the chapter explained why Central Asia, in particular Tajikistan, has seen an increase in drug trafficking through the region, why other countries are not the focal route, the effects of drug abuse and neglect, and why the United States and Russia need to focus more attention on the Central Asian drug trafficking dilemma. Chapter IV examines the strategies and capacities of the border agencies and how they fall short.

B. HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Knowing and understanding the history and geography of Russia is necessary to better comprehend why border security is such a problem area for Tajikistan. It will be necessary to ask why the collapse of the Soviet Union led to security weaknesses within the border system and why it is necessary for the newly independent states to develop a

sound border security program. Can Tajikistan provide a stable system without the help of Russia? Is Russia able to keep border guards in Tajikistan to help stop the flow drugs across the porous border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan? These questions will be answered in detail, but it will be necessary to see how the fall of the Soviet Union led to the newly independent states of Central Asia struggling with border security (in particular Tajikistan) and why this region is prone to drug trafficking.

The collapse of the Soviet border guard structures and the slow emergence of the Federal Border Service (FPS) of the Russian Federation is one of the least known episodes in the history of Russia's power structures. The collapse of the political and economic system which dominated the Soviet Union for more than seventy years was almost immediately followed by the collapse of the union and the gradual emergence of 14 independent states, eight of whom have land borders with Russia (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Byelorussia, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan); one (Turkmenistan) shares the Caspian Sea with Russia and several other countries; and five (Armenia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Moldova) do not share borders with Russia although Armenia and Tajikistan regard Moscow as a political ally and allow Russia to station border troops on their soil.

The new borders with the newly independent republics were yet to be delineated, demarcated and their infrastructure built and manned. The old external, Soviet borders of the new republics were crumbling fast and the borders in the Baltic countries and the

Transcaucasus had practically ceased to exist. By June 1992, Ukraine, Moldova, Byelorussia, the Transcaucasus and Central Asian states had begun to organize their own border guard structures and the Russian border troops, with a rapidly dwindling conscript pool, still guarded the Kyrgyz, Tajik and Turkmen borders.

Russia presently has 16 neighbors and an extensive border system. Their borders are approximately 61,000 km long. Of the total 14,500 km of Russian land borders, 13,500 km were new in 1992. Some parts have not yet been delineated and some have not yet been demarcated. Russia's water frontiers (sea, rivers and lakes) stretch for about

56,500 km, of which about 38,000 km is the sea coastline. Russia's exclusive economic zone covers 8.6 million km.¹³¹

In an interview with Federal Border Service Director Colonel-General Konstantin Vasilyevich Totskiy, he stated that,

Russia's border is something unique and not a single state in the world has such a vast territory, such a long border, and such a diverse pattern, if you take any parameters that usually characterize the borderline of any state. We have all of these. It includes the variety of physical and geographical and climatic conditions, from the Arctic conditions to the Black Sea coast, it is 12 time zones, it is the huge exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf of the Russian Federation.¹³²

Statistically there is one Russian border detachment per 100, or more, kilometers when, according to the present director of the FPS, there should be one detachment for every 10-15 km. "Of the 89 subjects of the Russian Federation 45 are border regions, and they include about 74 million people, i.e. 49.9% of the total population of the Russian Federation."¹³³ Twenty-four subjects of the Russian Federation are border regions for the first time. Russia is feeling the effects of this vast border and is continually studying and examining its border guard system.

C. TAJIKISTAN BORDER SECURITY (RUSSIAN BORDER GUARDS)

Border security in Tajikistan is important in helping to stop the drug trade that plagues the country. The most important security structure responsible for the security of the Tajik border is Russian, not a Tajik group. Russia has maintained its border troops within Tajikistan after the break up of the USSR in 1991. This is primarily due to the instability that was apparent in the country at that time. On 23 September 1992, the FPS Border Group was officially set up in Tajikistan, and on 25 May 1993 a bilateral agreement between Russia and Tajikistan was signed that gives the authority for the protection of the Tajik border to the FPS.¹³⁴ Originally this agreement was intended only

¹³¹ Bennett, George. "The Federal Border Guard Service." *Conflict Studies Research Center*, March 2002, p. 3.

¹³² Official Kremlin International News Broadcast. "Press Conference With Federal Frontier Service Director Konstantin Totskiy." *Federal News Service, Inc.*, 22 January 2002, pp. 1-2.

¹³³ Bennett, p. 3.

¹³⁴ McDermott, Roger N., "Border Security in Tajikistan: Countering the Narcotics Trade?," *Conflict Studies Research Center*, April 2002, p. 4.

to serve as an interim measure until the city of Dushanbe could construct and sufficiently strengthen its own border guard to protect its borders. The border group of the FPS stationed in Tajikistan is quite unique as a military formation, with “7% of its officers, nearly 50% of the warrant officers, 69% of contract servicemen and 99% of conscripts are Tajik citizens.”¹³⁵ The rest of the personnel in the FPS are Russian.

They are equipped with more than 300 artillery systems and artillery pieces. Although they have potential support from the Tajik Air force, in practical terms this often breaks down, since in the event of a violation of Tajik airspace the FPS can only inform the Tajik Air Force - operational control belongs to the Tajik MoD.¹³⁶

Additionally, eight tactic groups and artillery of the 201st Mechanized Infantry Division cover the border posts at the Pyandzh and Moscow border units. The SU-25 planes of the Detached Aviation Group and helicopters of the army aviation provide the air support.¹³⁷

The Russian Journal Daily in Moscow said “the international community must do more to cut the cultivation of drugs in Afghanistan to halt a growing tide of narcotics that flows into Russia and beyond.” Lt. Gen. Konstantin Totskiy said that,

The 10,700-strong Russian border guard unit on the border between Afghanistan and the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan had seized 5 1/2 metric tons (6.05 tons) of drugs, about 42 percent of it heroin, last year. In the first six months of 2002, they have seized 1,741 kilograms - almost 60 percent of it heroin, he said.¹³⁸

Traditionally, more drugs are confiscated during the second half of the year, after the poppy harvest. The amount of narcotics seized in any country accounts for just “one-tenth of the true flow,”¹³⁹ Totskiy said in an interview with The Associated Press. About 20-25 percent of the heroin that arrives in Russia is headed for Europe, Russian officials warn. “If Europe, the international community, wants to strengthen its borders ... it’s our conviction that the pressure has to be applied before the bow leaves the arrow,” Totskiy

¹³⁵ Ibid, p. 5.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 5.

¹³⁷ Sharkhel, Sergei. “A Decade Later.” Interview with Krasnaya Zvezda, 24 October 2002, p. 2.

¹³⁸ Zvezda, p. 3.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 3.

said. "Once the arrow has flown, it's very hard to catch."¹⁴⁰

The Russian border guards, the majority of them conscripts and contract soldiers from Tajikistan, are stationed on the Afghan border to try to catch drugs and weapons before they reach Russia. More than 10,000 Russian soldiers are also stationed in the Central Asian nation to help the impoverished Tajik government to protect its nation's borders.¹⁴¹

Russia and Tajikistan have been at the forefront of efforts to construct a so-called security belt around Afghanistan. The plan is to strengthen border controls to stem the flow of drugs being smuggled out of the nation on foot or by donkey.

They are consolidating it into convoys and they move in armed groups. Three or four in the front with Kalashnikovs. Maybe five in the middle carrying up to 400 pounds on their backs. Then maybe five more in the back, heavily armed.¹⁴²

Apparently, "they are well-equipped," according to Gordiyenko, the officer of the Russian guard that patrols the Tajik-Afghan border under an agreement with the Tajik government.

They have night-vision equipment. They have modern weapons. They have good intelligence.¹⁴³

Additionally, Col. Saidato Merzoev of the Tajik border guard service in Shurobod region said,

Traffickers use satellite phones to coordinate drops, and often have night vision equipment and wear Russian uniforms to fool guards. Informants advise them when troops are eating so they can time their illegal forays across the border.¹⁴⁴

On the other side of the border, "Afghan border guard commander Sameulloh Qatra said his troops are outmatched technologically by the narcotics traffickers: 'We do not have such equipment as they [the drug traffickers] have to completely prevent the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁴² Struck, Doug. "Central Asia's Other Fight; Armed Groups Also Tied to Lucrative Drug Trade." *The Washington Post*, Washington, D.C., November 7, 2001, p. A. 16.

¹⁴³ Ibid, p. A. 16.

¹⁴⁴ Herman, Burt. "Tajik-Afghan Border Faces Drug Traffic." *Ledger-Inquirer.com*, August 9, 2003, <http://www.ledger-enquirer.com/mld/ledgerenquirer/news/nation/6494205.htm>, Accessed on 03 October 2003, p. 2.

smuggling of narcotics. We do not have the capability to contain these smugglers.”¹⁴⁵ By the time they get out of Afghanistan, the drugs enter a huge transport network of trucks, trains, airplanes and ships that are virtually impossible to monitor completely.

While Afghan President Hamid Karzai’s government has banned poppy growing and is trying to find farmers alternative crops, drug experts around the world fear widespread resistance. Afghanistan became the world’s leading opium producer during the 1990s, including the years ruled by the same warlords who are again in power. Totskiy said the warlords could make an easy dlrs 8,000 a hectare with each poppy harvest. “If we don’t overcome the resistance of these field commanders, then Russia is always going to have heroin, and Europe will, and America will,” he said.

As mentioned previously, the guards on the rugged Tajik-Afghan border are ill equipped to fight drug traffickers. The guards have too few dogs and intelligence officers, and lack basic equipment such as radios, night-vision goggles, cars and gasoline. This year (2003), for the first time, they will be getting five thermal imagers, used to detect heat sources. Unfortunately, they would need hundreds to monitor the mountainous border that passes through the marshy Pyandzh River. Totskiy also urged that more be done on the ground in Afghanistan, including foreign donations of seed grain to Afghan farmers instead of ready-made flour.

D. FPS COMMAND STRUCTURE

After the breakup of the USSR Boris Yeltsin nominated General Andrey Nikolayev, the first deputy chief of the military General Staff, as the new head of the Border Guards. After five months, all the reform plans were ready. The Federal Border Service and the Main Command of the Border Troops was established on 30 December 1993 by Presidential Decree No 2318.¹⁴⁶ As a federal division of executive power, the FPS was tasked with protection of state borders, territorial waters, the continental shelf, and economic special zones and with the implementation of the state border policies. Yeltsin enacted further changes on 30 December 1994. The name of the new

¹⁴⁵ Pannier, Bruce. “Central Asia: Russia Urges Cooperation in Fight Against Drug Trafficking.” *Eurasia Insight*, November 16, 2003, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ Pike, John. “FPS Legislative Authority.” *FAS Intelligence Resource Program*, 26 November 1997, p. 2.

organization was shortened to the Federal Border Service, several departments were added to the central apparatus and some of the existing ones were reinforced.

The FPS then had a central apparatus that includes: the Main Staff; the newly created demilitarized Border Guards Department; the FPS Aviation; the Main Military Council; the Military-Scientific Council; the Main Military-Technical Council; the Foreign Treaties Department; the Intelligence Department; the Operational-Investigative Department; the Counterintelligence Department; the Internal Security Department; the Center of Operational-Border Research; the Scientific Research Technical Test Center; and educational establishments. The FPS had six Border Districts and several groups with different titles stationed in Russia and in some of the CIS states. For the first time the head of the border guards became a member of the Security Council.

In spite of the new, independent status of the FPS and his own military background, General Nikolayev tried to make the service more cost-effective and less military. The FPS was there to protect Russia's borders, not to defend them. In 1996 he proposed to reduce the FPS and to improve co-operation with other interested federal organs, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Federal Security Service, the State Customs Committee, the Federal Migration Service, and the Intelligence Service.

Change was inevitable for the border service and the most recent change happened this year (2003). On March 11, 2003 President Putin expanded the turf of Russia's domestic security agency, giving it responsibilities in government communications and border control that were once handled by the Soviet KGB. The changes are part of a pattern of growing influence of the Federal Security Service, the KGB's domestic successor, in the three years since Putin became president. Putin decree "restored FSB control over the country's 174,000 border guards, reversing Yeltsin's creation of the Russian Border Service as an independent agency."¹⁴⁷ The hope is border, information and security services will be able to fulfill a common task more efficiently.

¹⁴⁷ LeFraniere, Sharon. "Putin Gives Security Service New Powers." *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 12 March 2003, p. 2.

E. TAJIKISTAN BORDER GUARD SERVICE

In Tajikistan “the responsibility for border security is placed under two ‘power-ministries’: the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Security.”¹⁴⁸ Though Tajikistan is clearly heavily reliant upon Russia for its border security it does, however, possess its own border guard force, though substantially smaller and less able to fulfill its functions as effectively.¹⁴⁹ The Tajik border guard service is structured in much the same way as the FPS, with its headquarters in Dushanbe and divided into regional districts responsible for the security of the state border. The KOGG (Committee for the Protection of the State Border) is the Tajik border guard service.

“The KOGG is much smaller than the FPS Border Group stationed in Tajikistan and struggles to cope with its responsibilities.”¹⁵⁰ Due to its size and the lack of resources, the success of the Tajik border guard service in adequately protecting the Tajik border has been bleak. The KOGG urgently requires improved communications and other equipment to detect cases of both drug and weapon trafficking across the border. The United States has told Lieutenant General Abdurahmon Azimov, Chairman of the KOGG, that they will assist in “supplying communication, transport as well as training skilled specialists.”¹⁵¹ The KOGG needs to work on attracting quality personnel and then should work on expanding its involvement in the illegal drug trafficking.

Dushanbe plans to expand the KOGG in the coming years in order to take over more functions currently carried out by the FPS Border Group in Tajikistan. Azimov is hoping that the KOGG will triple in strength over the next two years, based on manpower cuts in other law enforcement agencies, though it remains unclear as to which departments and units will be reduced.

The Tajik Drug Control Agency (AKN) was created in 1998 by the support of President Rakhmonov and with the financial assistance of the UN. “Its main function is to document and collect data and curb regional drug trafficking.”¹⁵² This security agency

¹⁴⁸ McDermott, p. 6.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ McDermott, p. 13.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p. 14.

¹⁵² Ibid, p. 19.

is under the direct supervision of President Rakhmonov with a staff of more than 300. This staff will be hired over a three-year period and the UNDCP has offered to assist in the hiring process, as well as supplying communications and other equipment. President Rakhmonov realizes that there is a great deal of corruption in the KOGG and believes that he can help in the success of the AKN. Additionally, in order to avoid corruption within the AKN, the “salaries to employees of the AKN are very high: ranging between \$100 to \$600 per month (the average monthly salary in Tajikistan is less than \$10 per month).”¹⁵³ Employment in the AKN involves a strict selection process and over 90% of its employees have higher education. Higher education in Tajikistan is a rarity. “Since its creation in 1999 it has accumulated a database of drug smugglers containing 19,000 individuals, it also works very closely with Russian agencies such as the MVD, FSB, and FPS and internally with the KOGG.”¹⁵⁴ Focus has now been turned to Afghanistan and Tajikistan is working on programs to curb drug trafficking. Dushanbe and Kabul are sharing intelligence and helping to train Afghan specialists in counter drug strategies.

The role of President Vladimir Putin is critical in shaping the priorities and directing the nature of border security policy. Putin approved a border security concept on “1 September 2001, entitled: ‘The Concept for Guarding the Russian Federation State border, the Internal Maritime Waters, the Territorial Sea, the continental Shelf, the Russian Federation Exclusive Economic Zone, and Their Natural Resources in 2001-2005’.”¹⁵⁵ The concept describes the security concerns of the Russian Federation, which look at the increase of the smuggling of narcotics, weapons and ammunition, and the activity of transnational organized crime. Also, it looks at the activities of terrorist organizations and groups and illegal armed formations across the state border.

F. 201ST MOTOR RIFLE DIVISION

Russian influence in Central Asia is a significant factor in the present strategic situation around Afghanistan. The most important military element in that influence is the motor rifle division in Tajikistan. Taking a look back in history between the years of 1945 to 1991 it can be seen that the 201 Motor Rifle Division (MRD) was stationed in the

¹⁵³ Ibid, p. 20.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 20.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 5.

Central Asian Military District and was one of the first formations to enter Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion in December 1979.

The division served in Afghanistan throughout the war and was awarded a second Order of the Red Banner in 1985. One of its armored personnel carriers, BTR-60 No 305, was the last vehicle to cross back onto Soviet territory, carrying General Boris Gromov and the banner of 40th Army. The vehicle is preserved as a memorial within the division.¹⁵⁶

After the collapse of the USSR in 1991 most of the former Soviet forces in Central Asia came under the control of the new republics in which they were deployed. “The disintegration of the Tajik government and the outbreak of civil war in 1992 ensured a different fate for the 201st.”¹⁵⁷ Its locally-conscripted Tajik soldiers slipped away as the war began but the mostly Russian officers and warrant officers stayed at their posts, bringing their families into their barracks and refusing to surrender their arms and equipment to the mobs outside.

The 201st has faced its share of difficulties during its onset and fell short of meeting Yeltsin’s goals. One key event that brought the weakness of the 201st to light was Nabiyeu’s ouster on September 2, 1992 by the Islamic extremist parties.¹⁵⁸ The escalation of fighting in Tajikistan provoked prompt and strong reaction from Russia and the neighboring Central Asian states. Just one day after the removal of Nabiyeu, the Presidents of Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan issued a warning to the government and political organizations of Tajikistan describing the unrest as a danger to the CIS. They also announced their collective decision to deploy CIS troops along the 1300 km long Tajik-Afghan border to stop the large scale smuggling of arms and cross border movement of armed bands. Towards the end of September 1992 the Russian Defense Minister sent additional troops to strengthen the beleaguered 201st Motorized Rifle Division stationed in Tajikistan and authorized its commanding officers to prevent seizure of arms, equipment and munitions belonging to Russian troops and unlawful acts against Russian Servicemen and their families. But matters were made worse by the

¹⁵⁶ Orr, M. J. “The Russian Garrison in Tajikistan – 201st Gatchina Twice Red Banner Motor Rifle Division.” *Conflict Studies Research Center*, Occasional Brief No. 85, 18 October 2001, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ Rakhmon Nabiyeu, the former Communist who had been elected as the President of Tajikistan in November 1991, tried to buy peace by including members of the Islamist opposition groups in government and administration. But the IRP and its supporters were determined to wrest total political control.

connivance of Tajik authorities and leaders with the armed Tajik extremist groups and Afghan field commanders. Piqued at this ground situation the Russian Border Guards Officers Corps in Tajikistan sent an appeal to Boris Yeltsin, the President of Russia on November 13, 1992 questioning the expediency of further stay of their units in the absence of guarantees of legal and social protection. The stiff opposition by Tajik media and Islamic parties compounded the problem to the presence of Russian troops who were accused of interference in the internal affairs of Tajikistan and were even charged of supplying/selling arms and fuel to anti-Islamic forces.

In September 1992 “President Yeltsin took 201 MRD under Russian jurisdiction and it became the basis of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force in Tajikistan.”¹⁵⁹ When the Tajik civil war ended and the peacekeeping force was disbanded the Russian and Tajik governments agreed that the division should be transformed into a military base. However the agreement, “signed on 16 April 1999, has never been formally implemented and 201 MRD’s present and future status within Tajikistan remain undefined.”¹⁶⁰

The 201 MRD retains the classic Soviet motor rifle divisional organization, with three motor rifle regiments and combat support and combat service support units. “Divisional headquarters is located in the Giprozemgorodok barracks complex on the outskirts of Dushanbe, together with 92 Motor Rifle Regiment and most of the support units (tank battalion, artillery regiment, air defense regiment, engineer, signals, reconnaissance, transport and maintenance elements, etc).”¹⁶¹ The 149 Guards Motor Rifle Regiment is based in Kulyab and 191 Motor Rifle Regiment in Kurgan-Tyube.¹⁶² Additionally, a helicopter squadron with Mi-8 and Mi-24 helicopters supports the division from Dushanbe South airport. Fixed wing aircraft are also deployed on rotation from squadrons in the Russian Federation. “The division has 160 tanks, 300 armored

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁶² Ibid, p. 2.

personnel carriers, about 200 artillery pieces and mortars and 1100 transport vehicles. Its total strength is between 6,000 and 7,000 men and women.”¹⁶³

The main role of 201 MRD is to provide “echeloned support” for the Russian Border Guard forces on the Tajik-Afghan border. This mission dates back to the events of “July 1993 when a border post was over-run by Tajik rebels and The Russian Garrison in Tajikistan - 201st Gatchina Twice Red Banner Motor Rifle Division its garrison gruesomely massacred.”¹⁶⁴ The disaster revealed the low tactical standards of the Border Troops and an almost total lack of co-ordination between the Border Guards and 201 MRD.

The division now provides, “7 reinforced company tactical groups in static positions to back up the border guards...149 Guards Motor Rifle Regiment supports the Moskovskiy district's 117 Border Detachment and 191 Motor Rifle Regiment supports 48 Border Detachment in the Pyandzh district.”¹⁶⁵ Dushanbe based units are also used to reinforce the border, especially artillery and engineer elements. The company tactical groups basically consist of a motor rifle company with tank and mortar sub-units.

“Coordination with the border guards has improved since 1993; joint procedures have been established and motor rifle and border guard troops do train together.”¹⁶⁶ However there have been no major border incursions (as opposed to smuggling or illegal immigration) since 1995. Deployments along the border last for a month and the company group is then rotated back to its base.

The Dushanbe garrison provides guards for vulnerable points such as the Russian embassy, the Russian school, its own barracks and armaments and fuel depots. Air defense units are responsible for both air and ground defense of the Russian air group at Dushanbe South airfield. “92 Motor Rifle Regiment in Dushanbe has provided a company or platoon for the ‘Centrasbat’ series of multinational peace-keeping exercises which have been held annually since 1997.”¹⁶⁷ It also seems that this regiment will also

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 2-3.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 3.

provide a reinforced motor rifle battalion as the Russian contribution to the new Central Asian Rapid Deployment Force. This force was set up under CIS auspices in 2001 and so far has held a couple of command post exercises and a low-level field firing exercise in October in Kyrgyzstan.

It is not clear whether the force is yet considered fully operational. It was originally intended to counter incursions into the Osh valley and a change of focus might delay its availability.¹⁶⁸

The anti-terrorist and anti-drug operations in Afghanistan have obviously had an impact on 201 MRD. Although there are conflicting reports about the raising of its readiness state, Russian television has shown pictures of a pontoon bridge being built across the Pyandzh River so that military equipment can be passed to the Northern Alliance. It is probable that the Afghan end of the bridge is protected by Russian troops and some sources claim that advisers are training Northern Alliance troops to use their new weapons and helping to maintain them. Such advisers are most likely to come from 201 MRD, but official Russian sources have so far denied their presence in Afghanistan. At the end of September a meeting between Emomali Rakhmonov, the president of Tajikistan and Vladimir Rushaylo, the secretary of the Russian Security Council, emphasized that preventing Afghan refugees from entering Tajikistan is a major mission for the division and the border guards.¹⁶⁹

Unfortunately, there are serious limitations on the division's effectiveness. It has not received much new equipment (if any) since the Afghan War and the supply of spares and ammunition is often disrupted by local bureaucratic quarrels. In terms of manpower it is only half a division and at least a third of its rank and file have only been in the country for a few weeks. In normal times acclimatization and shakedown training are reckoned to take up to three months. For the last decade the division has been playing a largely static, defensive role, guarding key points and convoys, manning fortified positions near the border and rehearsing local deployments to backup frontier posts under attack. There has been no field training above battalion level. All these factors indicate that the 201 MRD is unlikely to operate as a division-size formation. It would be able to

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 3.

assist the border guards in refugee management, although a major exodus into Tajikistan would probably overwhelm any force that could be deployed along the 1,400 kilometer border.

G. U.S. ASSISTANCE TO TAJIKISTAN BORDER SYSTEM

The U.S. Department of State Anti-Crime Training and Technical Assistance (ACTTA) Program provides support for counter-narcotics and anti-crime efforts in Tajikistan. The support provided during FY 2002 was modest due to the security situation in the country and the limited U.S. presence. Much of the U.S. assistance provided consisted of training for Tajik officials, including Customs and Drug Control Agency representatives. The State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) helped prepare senior and working-level Tajik law enforcement officials by sponsoring training courses, seminars and conferences, mainly at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Budapest. In addition, Tajik law enforcement officials participated in a train-the-trainer course in Dushanbe on narcotics detection and interdiction sponsored by the U.S. Customs Service, drug enforcement seminars in Tashkent sponsored by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and regional prosecutorial development and assistance conferences sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice. The U.S. Customs Service also sponsored the travel to the U.S. of four officers from the Tajik Customs Service and Drug Control Agency to participate in a weeklong border interdiction seminar. Law enforcement training programs prepared Tajik participants for combating terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and weapons proliferation, and addressed law enforcement in a context of rule of law and human rights.

In FY 2002, the major initiative to combat the flow of narcotics out of neighboring Afghanistan and into and across Tajikistan has been the establishment of the Tajik Drug Control Agency, with the help of the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP). Through INL, the U.S. Government has provided funding for this project and the agency has met with successes in centralizing and expanding Tajik drug control efforts. Tajik authorities are currently reviewing a draft Letter of Agreement that will provide a basis for developing new projects with INL. Drug seizures, mainly heroin originating in Afghanistan, remain the highest in the region. In FY 2003, FY 2002

Supplemental funding will be used to provide additional infrastructure development to combat drug trafficking, including funding for the continued operations of the Drug Control Agency and funding for judicial programs, financial crime deterrence and drug interdiction.

The U.S. Department of State Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) Program is another program utilized for assisting Tajikistan. In FY 2002, the U.S. Government continued to provide EXBS assistance to Tajikistan focused on developing and enhancing the country's capabilities to prevent proliferation and detect, interdict, and investigate illegal transfers of weapons, drugs and materials. In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, "Tajikistan was allocated \$7.5 million from the Emergency Response Fund supplemental appropriation for enhanced border security activities under the EXBS Program."¹⁷⁰ These funds are being used to procure "uniforms, communications equipment, vehicles, Global Positioning Systems, binoculars, generators, remodeling a training center for an English language laboratory, interdiction tool kits with border enforcement training, pagers, ground sensors, personal gear for officers, train-the-trainer equipment and portal monitors."¹⁷¹ FY 2002 efforts were also targeted at support for infrastructure upgrades at border patrol training academies and to further enhance legal and regulatory mechanisms. In November 2002,

Tajik officials received International Border Interdiction Training in Hidalgo, Texas. Russian Border Forces have recently withdrawn from the Chinese border, leaving the Tajikistan Border Guards new challenges to patrol and secure that border.¹⁷²

Russian border forces remain the primary force on the Tajikistan's southern border with Afghanistan. The Government of Tajikistan has participated in the EXBS-funded Central Asian Regional Communications Link (CACL) that is strengthening intra-governmental coordination on border security, and helping Tajikistan and its neighbors tighten control over illicit trafficking and movement of international terrorists.

¹⁷⁰ "FY 2002 U.S. Assistance to Eurasia." *U.S. Department of State*, January 2003, <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rpt/c10251.htm>, accessed 29 September 2003, p. 2.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, p. 2.

Tajikistan's border security officials also have taken part in regional and international export control and border security training workshops and conferences.

H. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Tajikistan faces numerous difficulties when studying the border security dilemma in the region. The state is unable to effectively combat drug trafficking across its border with Afghanistan. Tajikistan is severely restricted by its topography, impoverished and stagnant economy, pervasive corruption in the political and security bodies and the poor condition of the KOGG. President Rakhmonov is dependent upon the continued security assistance provided by the Russian Federation despite public declarations in Dushanbe concerning expanding and increasing the role of the KOGG. If governments in Central Asia are serious about wanting stability, corruption is one of the most important issues for them to address. Experience elsewhere has shown that tackling corruption requires a broad program of complementary measures, including legislation, higher salaries, less bureaucracy and consistent political leadership. Genuine attempts to implement such policies in Central Asia would begin to undermine many of the region's largest drug traffickers.

The Central Asian Border Guards and their Russian commanders, who continued to remain under the CIS unified command, did not receive adequate support from Russia after the disintegration of USSR. The Border Guards defending the Tajik-Afghan border were now facing acute shortage of men, fuel and funds that prevented them to get reinforcements or increase mobility for effectively dealing with the increased border violations. Besides, the Russian officers and troops were reluctant to shed their blood for the security of Tajikistan that was now an independent and sovereign country.

The FPS faces many issues with its Federal Border Guard Service (FPS). The immigration issues, border disputes, education issues, aviation and naval shortages and many problems that face the FPS will hopefully be resolved. President Putin and General Totskiy were essential elements to ensure the success of the FPS and the many programs involved, but on 11 March 2003, President Putin announced the most significant reforms of the Russian security structures since the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation declared, on 15 January 1992, that Boris Yeltsin's decision to establish a Ministry of

Security and Internal Affairs was illegal. The Federal Border Guard Service (FPS) was transferred to the Federal Security Service (FSB), not as an equal partner but as a substructure.¹⁷³

The FSB's new border guard element will improve its position among the Russian power structures. General Patrushev has inherited the largest border guarding organization in the world. "Even with the planned staff reductions from 200,000 to 182,500 by 2006, the border guards will be the numerically largest component of the FSB."¹⁷⁴ They will also become an important FSB asset in collecting information useful to all power bodies. The border guard work will force the FSB and the MVD to improve and streamline their cooperation. In addition to its law enforcement functions, the MVD is in charge of immigration procedures and of issuing many legal documents. The contacts that it had in the past with the FPS will now be transferred to the FSB.¹⁷⁵

The examples above show how border security in Tajikistan is weak and changes are needed to provide a more solid border system. Due to the weak border and numerous other problems facing the region, it is no wonder why Tajikistan has become a focal point for drug traffickers. Chapter two showed how there is a drug problem in Central Asia. Evidence showed there are problems, the reasons for the problems, and why it is a matter of concern to Russia and the United States. Chapter three showed why the Afghanistan-Tajikistan cross-border trafficking is center of gravity. Additionally, it analyzed the trafficking groups and routes in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. This chapter examined the strategies and capacities of the border agencies and how they fall short. Chapter five will offer policy recommendations and conclusions.

¹⁷³ Bennett, Gordon. "FPS and FAPSI – RIP." *Conflict Studies Research Center*, Occasional Brief No. 96, 17 March 2003, p. 2.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 4-5.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 5.

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V. CONCLUSION

A. INTRODUCTION

Drug trafficking and drug use has seen an extremely fast growth throughout the Central Asian states. There is no quick solution to the rapid rise in illegal activities between the states. Many areas need to be closely looked at in order to try and slow the rising epidemic. The terrain in many of the Central Asian states is not conducive to the proper border protection systems that would help curb drug trafficking. Many problems and concerns have been listed, but action needs to take place in order to slow the rise in drug use and trade. Continuing efforts are being attempted and governments are taking on new programs to try and stop the drug trafficking. Money is a major issue and is one area that will slow the process immensely. The continued involvement of UN support will aid the effort to fight drug trade and use.

Western Europe has been the main destination for heroin from Afghanistan. Today, movements of people, goods and funds have intensified greatly in large and increasingly open geopolitical areas, like the European Union and the countries that will join it, but also in countries like the Commonwealth of Independent States, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Freedom is gaining ground, but this change also has unfortunate effects, including an increase in drug addiction in vulnerable populations and the emergence of powerful international criminal groups.

International organized crime is growing rich from drug trafficking. It generates terrible corruption. The mafias controlling drug traffic are the same ones trafficking in persons and weapons, and all kinds of other criminal activities. Central Asia, Russia and the United States must act together to ensure that these criminals do not find “gray areas” where they can prosper with impunity as borders are opened up. Today’s criminal gangs use the most advanced technology. They turn borders to their advantage, juggle with procedures and work with professionals. Their many facets can threaten efforts to build up governments and democracy in new countries. They are worming their way into the core of the world economic system, bringing crime, violence and anarchy.

The drug routes are also the paths of suffering, despair, weakness and disease. How many lives have been destroyed, how many families torn apart, how much potential spoiled when a youth or a child crosses the path of a dealer in death? Drug addiction is a public health issue. It threatens the fabric of society by excluding addicts and causes huge health damage (this includes the ravages of AIDS, hepatitis and tuberculosis). The fight against drugs must mobilize all health and social bodies at national and international levels. There is a terrifying explosion in AIDS infection through intravenous drug use in some countries. The countries hit hardest are the ones that do not have necessary means and structures to cope.

Once again, the key words are action and solidarity. Central Asia, Russia and the United States cannot shirk the duty to fight drug production and trafficking from one home front. There are no longer transit countries or consumer countries; there are only victim countries. Producing countries are locked in a vicious cycle. Consumer countries are losing their lifeblood.

B. PROBLEMS AND ANSWERS

Chapter two discussed why drug trafficking has shifted to Tajikistan, the economics involved, the effects of drug production and trafficking and why the United States and Russia should concern themselves with the problems. The economic situation is one of the main causes of frustration that makes Central Asia potentially highly explosive. If stability is to come to the region, the factors contributing to economic decline must be addressed, including prominently the rising level of youthful drug addiction.

Through the aid of the IMF and the World Bank, Tajikistan is slowly starting to recover from its economic difficulties. Authorities have completed an inventory of government, government-guaranteed, and state-enterprise debts, and they have written to bilateral creditors to confirm the status of their debt. Structural reform will be necessary to try and rebuild Tajikistan's economic difficulties.

The IMF has approved a three-year, US\$87 million dollar poverty reduction and growth facility (PRGF) arrangement for Tajikistan. This program has been put in place

to support the governments economic program through September 2005.¹⁷⁶ The IMF plans on contributing approximately US \$11 million. The PRGF is the IMF's concessional facility for low-income countries. The PRGF supported programs are based on country owned poverty reduction strategies and primarily aims to sustain growth, accelerate structural reform, maintain low inflation and exchange rate stability, and strengthen debt management. The program will implement key structural reforms aimed at eliminating weaknesses in the banking sector, distortions in the energy sector, government interference in the agricultural sector and weak governance. Additionally, any remaining state-owned farms will be restructured and privatized by the end of 2005 through the issuance of land use and land share certificates. Economic governance will be improved by reducing excessive government intervention in economic affairs, enhancing transparency, accountability and economic management. The National Bank of Tajikistan (NBT) will be prohibited from issuing directed credit and making expenditures not related to its core business activities or paying dividends while it has negative net worth.

In addition to the above measures provided by the PRGF, Tajikistan will continue to receive aid and support for economic reform programs. Current expenditures are projected to rise modestly over the program period, mainly due to increased outlays for health, education, and targeted social programs. The focus of this reform will be to place emphasis on problems facing the poor in accessing essential social services.

The PRGF program will emphasize a 40 percent increase in the public sector wage bill for 2003. This increase will be necessary to bring civil service salaries more in line with the private sector, to alleviate poverty among the low paid civil servants in the health and education sectors, and to combat corruption. There has been some argument that raising public sector wages across the board is not an effective means of reducing poverty. The wage bill would be more effective if wages were only raised 20 percent.

The PRGF feels that a gradual increase in tax collections will aid Tajikistan's economy. "Tax revenues are projected to increase to 15.8 percent of GDP in 2003 from

¹⁷⁶ IMF. "Republic of Tajikistan: 2002 Article IV Consultation and Request for a Three-Year Arrangement Under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility – Staff Report." *IMF Country Report No. 03/10*, 11 December 2002, p. 1.

14.1 percent of GDP in 2001.”¹⁷⁷ In an effort to achieve this target, a number of tax measures have been taken to simplify the income tax structure to broaden the tax base, increase the excise tax rates on alcohol and tobacco, and introduce a pilot unified agricultural tax in several regions. In addition, the program will delay the move to the VAT on cotton until 2004.

In addition to the aid received from IMF and World Bank, Tajikistan will continue to receive support from the CIS-7. Tajikistan is part of the CIS-7 Initiative that was launched a year ago to address concerns about the severe economic difficulties, increases in poverty, and rapid build-up of debt in many CIS-7 countries since independence in the early 1990’s. The countries covered by the Initiative are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Also, Tajikistan recently signed a Poverty Partnership Agreement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) laying down their shared vision for eradicating poverty in the country. The joint strategy for poverty reduction starts with the recognition of the multidimensional features of poverty and understanding of the root causes of poverty. The ADB notes that while poverty levels in Tajikistan may have intensified since 1991, the improvement in the safety and security situation following the successful peace process, and the positive and high economic growth rates achieved in recent years have stalled a further rise in poverty incidence. Using the Millennium Development Goals for 2015 as key targets against which to measure its performance, the Government and ADB have set the following as their aims by 2015 to: “Reduce poverty to 58% from about 83% in 1999, increase primary education coverage to 90% from 78% in 2000, eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, decrease infant mortality by 2010 to 25 deaths per 1,000 from 37 deaths per 1,000 in 2000, reduce maternal mortality by 2010 to 35 deaths per 1,000 from 43 deaths per 1,000 in 2000, and improve access to safe drinking water to 80% from 51% in 2000.”¹⁷⁸ To achieve these targets, both parties have agreed to expand job opportunities through pro-poor growth measures and to improve the access of the poor to basic social services and targeted social assistance. “In its program

¹⁷⁷ IMF Country Report, p. 17.

¹⁷⁸ “ADB: ADB Signs Poverty Partnership with Tajikistan.” *M2 Presswire*, 02 December 2002, p. 1-2.

to 2005, ADB plans investment and sector development loans as well as technical assistance to Tajikistan in agriculture and rural finance sector development, transport, power and energy, water resource management, customs modernization, the social sector, and capacity and institutional building on legal and judicial reforms as well as innovative poverty reduction measures.”¹⁷⁹

As has been previously mentioned Tajikistan suffers from difficulties within its drug treatment programs. Drug treatment programs are severely under funded. Regional governments have not made them a priority and treatment centers have often been left to the regional NGO's. In the GBAO region of Tajikistan, local NGO's claim authorities are only able to provide treatment for a very small percentage of the addicts. Without follow-up, most of the addicts who are treated relapse. The NGO's dealing with addicts in GBAO feel such follow-up should include some type of work placement. Private clinics have also stepped in to fill the treatment inadequacies left by local governments. Some are controversial and are seen as doing little beyond making profits out of patients and their families. In Tajikistan, methadone therapy is not legal, although a pilot program is being considered. Kyrgyzstan has announced that they will be starting a program of free methadone distribution. Another problem that NGO's encounter working with drug users is the attitude of public police. They are generally hostile towards users and often arrest those who come to treatment centers or exchange points. NGOs have been meeting with police and local officials to explain the programs and encourage them to go after drug dealers rather than users. The fact remains though, that more effort has been expended on interdiction than on treatment in Central Asia.

AIDS awareness and prevention is a serious issue that needs to be addressed. Public awareness to HIV/AIDS needs to be given strict attention. Also, trust points need to be established where information on the disease and other sexually transmitted infections as well as sterile syringes, condoms, and counseling are available. Some success has been met, but the epidemic is growing rapidly and services need to be made available. For example, Kyrgyzstan allocates a mere \$26,500 for AIDS prevention and

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 2.

awareness programs. Detected HIV cases remain low with only 47 in the year 2000.¹⁸⁰ “Only two, both intravenous drugs users, were reported in Osh, the country’s second city and a major transit point for heroin.”¹⁸¹ Only three to four percent of the country’s drug users are tested for HIV, and there are concerns that an epidemic could break out. Exchange points have found 30-50 percent of returned needles test HIV positive.¹⁸²

Chapter three established why the Afghanistan-Tajikistan cross-border trafficking is the center of gravity and then analyzed trafficking groups and routes in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. There is a need to recognize that social and political stability, as well as wider economic growth, are essential preconditions for eliminating opium poppy cultivation on a sustainable basis in Afghanistan. The elimination of poppy cultivation requires an enabling environment to establish the institutions needed for formal governance and civil society, as well as promote licit on-farm and off-farm income opportunities.

Poppy growing is the symptom not the cause of poverty. Indeed it should not be seen just as an agricultural problem requiring agricultural solutions but as a multi-faceted economic and social problem requiring a wide-ranging approach. Opium production in Afghanistan is different from other large-scale producing areas around the world. In most places, opium is a low-yielding crop produced on marginal land. However, in the major growing areas of Afghanistan, poppy production has become a mainstream crop produced on good land as an integral part of the major production system.

Experience with successful elimination of opium poppy cultivation in other countries demonstrate that eliminating poppy cultivation requires substantial commitment to long-term development and poverty reduction strategies. Given the scale of the problem, the number of people involved, and the intense economic pressure that drives the whole system, there can be no quick fix to eliminating opium production in Afghanistan. It is essential that efforts to improve rural livelihoods are part of broad

¹⁸⁰ Noubel, Phillipe. “AIDS Outbreak in Southern Kyrgyzstan,” *The Times of Central Asia*, 05 July 2001, p. 34.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, p. 35.

¹⁸² Ibid, p. 36-37.

based economic and social development. Furthermore, poppy growing should be given priority for domestic budgetary allocation and for international assistance.

Chapter four examined the strategies and capacities of the border agencies and how they fall short. Security problems resulting from the increasing flow of narcotics illegally smuggled across the 1200 km Tajikistan-Afghanistan border have become critical in understanding the nature of political instability within Central Asia. One such problem and concern is the ability of the Tajik state to combat drug trafficking. Tajikistan is severely restricted by its topography, impoverished and stagnant economy, pervasive corruption in the political and security bodies and the poor condition of the KOGG. President Rakhmonov is dependent upon the continued security assistance provided by the Russian Federation despite public declarations in Dushanbe concerning expanding and increasing the role of the KOGG. If governments in Central Asia are serious about wanting stability, corruption is one of the most important issues for them to address. Experience elsewhere has shown that tackling corruption requires a broad program of complementary measures, including legislation, higher salaries, less bureaucracy and consistent political leadership. Genuine attempts to implement such policies in Central Asia would begin to undermine many of the region's largest drug traffickers.

C. UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA

Chapter II emphasized why the United States and Russia have not focused attention on the drug trade in the region? First of all, on August 15, 2003, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfield said that "opium production in Afghanistan has gone up since the fall of the Taliban regime and he does not know how to curb it."¹⁸³ Additionally he stated, "And you ask what we are going to do, and the answer is, I don't really know. I think it's an awfully tough problem."¹⁸⁴ Mr. Rumsfield said the Afghan heroin was a bigger problem for Europe and Russia rather than the US because it's mainly smuggled to the European nations. He said Britain has taken the lead in trying to curb the production of opium, which is used for making heroin, in Afghanistan because "they have the

¹⁸³ "US Cannot Curb Opium Output: Rumsfield on Afghanistan Situation." *Afghan.com*, 16 August 2003, p. 1.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 1.

greatest concern about it. The United States has offered to help the UK.”¹⁸⁵ He does not want the,

Over-stretched 8,000 US soldiers in Afghanistan to become sidetracked from their main goal: to capture and kill terrorists. And chasing drug smugglers could take away allies from the Americans.¹⁸⁶

Obviously, the United Kingdom is not able to take on the fight against drug trafficking alone. Russia will have to continue to provide assistance and manpower to the region. Additionally, the United States needs to step up efforts in the region to stop the flow of illegal drugs from Afghanistan to Europe. Corruption in the Tajik government is stopping the country from becoming more stable and able to fight the drug war. Steps are being taken to better the economy of Tajikistan and the United States is still working closely with the Afghanistan government to bring about stability. Unfortunately, time will either help or hurt the Central Asian region. One thing is for sure, the drug trade is flourishing through the northern route of Afghanistan, into Tajikistan and on through Europe. Unless Russia and the United States collaborate and utilize the assistance of other European countries (like the UK) drug use and trafficking will become greater than it has ever been!

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 1.

¹⁸⁶ McGirk, Tim. “Drugs? What Drugs?” *Time*, 18 August 2003, p. 23.

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